

Online Study Materials on  
**INTERFAITH, RELIGION  
AND SPIRITUALITY**

**51**

**INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW OF INTERFAITH  
RELATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS**

---

---

**INTER-RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION**

An inter-religious organisation or interfaith organisation is an organisation that encourages dialogue and cooperation between the world's different religions. In 1893, the Parliament of the Worlds Religions held, in conjunction with the World Columbian Exposition, a conference in Chicago that is believed to be the first interfaith gathering of significance. In the century since, many organisations have been founded.

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

- *American Jewish Committee (AJC) Dept of Inter-religious Affairs, established 1906, website*
- *Association of Interfaith Ministers (AIM), established 1986*
- *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University website*
- *Boston Dialogue Foundation, established 2000, website*
- *Center for World Thanksgiving, established 1964*
- *Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, established 1988, website*
- *Dovetail Institute for Interfaith Family Resources (DI-IFR), website*
- *Ecumene: A Meeting Place for the World's Religions and Ideologies, website*
- *Elijah Interfaith Institute, established 1996, website*
- *Greater Boston Interfaith Organisation (GBIO), established 1996, website*

- *Fellowship of Reconciliation* (FOR), established 1914
- *Focolare Movement*
- *Humanity's Team*, established 2003, website

Concentrating on belonging to a particular race, religion or nation, will peace and happiness prevail on this earth.

The strength of inter-religious solidarity in action against apartheid, rather than mere harmony or co-existence, was crucial in bringing that evil system to an end.

When every soul will rise above petty divisions in true spiritual understanding, world misery will be consumed in the fire of the realisation of the universality of God and the fellowship of humanity"

We need to pursue peace even when we are grossly provoked; in the end people die, not Catholics or Hindus or Muslims.

Men and women of faith are a strong influence on group and individual conduct. As teachers and guides, you can be powerful agents for change. You can inspire people to new levels of commitment and public service. You can help bridge the chasms of ignorance, fear and misunderstanding. You can set an example of interfaith dialogue and co-operation.

In all work in the interfaith movement we must never forget the importance of our own individual inner aspirations. We have to move through prayer, through meditation, through study, through devoted work, towards the true centres of our being.

The essential aspiration of religions is for reconciliation, human fellowship and peace. By awakening the spiritual consciousness of humanity, we can establish moral order in human society. Spiritual traditions of the world should, therefore, stand together and work for the greater glory of God and the greater happiness of humankind.

Would you revise your two sentences after reading these quotes? If so, what would they read like now?

## **PROMOTING GOOD INTERFAITH RELATIONS**

### **INTERFAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK**

The Interfaith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country. Its member organisations include representative bodies from the Baha'i; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jain; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and Zoroastrian

communities; national and local interfaith bodies; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with interfaith issues.

## **UNDERSTANDING WITH INTEGRITY**

The Network works with its member bodies to help make the UK a place marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

The Network's way of working is firmly based on the principle that dialogue and cooperation can only prosper if they are rooted in respectful relationships which do not blur or undermine the distinctiveness of different religious traditions.

On this site you will find information about our work and be able to download many of our publications.

## **UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE**

The United Religions Initiative (URI), founded by Bishop William E. Swing (The Seventh Bishop of the Diocese of California of the Episcopal Church), was inspired to bring people of diverse faith into cooperation for peace by the example of the work of nations of the world through United Nations working to bring peace. The movement to found it began in 1996, culminating in the signing of the United Religions Initiative Charter in 2000.

"The purpose of the URI is to promote enduring daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings."

The URI emphasises a decentralised, grass roots structure that includes not only representation of the world's major religious organisations, but also other voices not often heard. It complements the work of and collaborates with other local and international interfaith organisations, such as the Council for a Parliament of the Worlds Religions.

## **ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN**

The URI is composed of over 300 Cooperation Circles (CCs)—groups of 7 or more individuals dedicated to the URI Preamble, Purpose, and Principles (collectively, the Charter). For administrative purposes, these CCs are divided into 8 regions:

- Africa
- Asia

- 
- Europe
  - Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Middle East and North Africa
  - Multi-regional
  - North America
  - Pacific

Each region elects 3 Trustees to sit on the Global Council (GC), which functions as the Board of Directors for the United Religions Initiative, Inc. (a California 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation). The GC is elected every 3 years; the most recent elections were held in 2005. In addition as serving as the fiscal agents for the global URI, the GC sets policy formal policy and approves new member CCs. The GC is defined by the URI Charter and Bylaws as primarily an advisor to the local CCs, rather than a command-and-control body.

World Alliance of Interfaith Clergy—A professional organisation for seminary trained persons who have studied world religions.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)—An organisation that is rooted in Christian experience and involves people of many traditions. Some say AA is a religious group and others say it is secular. A link to the Christian perspective.

Mall Area Religious Council (MARC)—This Minnesota USA based organisation that was seed bed for the Interfaith Calendar website, now a separate venture. A joint venture by congregations of many world religions with the vision of spiritual presence at Mall of America in Bloomington, MARC continues to explore ways of opening communication between adherents of world religions.

Pluralism Project Based at Harvard University, the site provides significant information on pluralism in America as it is expressed in the religious community. The Interfaith Calendar is noted in the site as an example of effective calendars.

United Religions Initiative An organisation promoting daily interfaith cooperation

National Council for Community and Justice An organisation that applies religious resources to combat bias, bigotry and racism in America. Encourages respect between races, religions and cultures.

## STUDY RESOURCES

Primary Sacred Dates for World Religions

New Years Dates for World Religions

Religion Facts—A comprehensive religions information resource site.

Comparative-Religion.com—Presented as the largest site for religious resources in the UK, this site is a gathering of information on key books and writing of the world's religions.

Religious Tolerance Sources of information on various religious traditions.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life A research organisation that deals with many aspects of religion.

Origin of major world religions. Approximate dates for origins based for the most part on the founders life span.

More Religious Dates—When people suggest sacred dates of particular personal interest, this is a place for sharing the information. There are multiple special designations for every single day. The rich diversity of world religions is displayed graphically. Suggestions are invited. Email

Multifaith Library—A programme of the Ontario Multifaith Council. Materials are made available to those who provide spiritual care to residents of Ontario. One unique offering is service to offenders, chaplains and counselors related to provincial incarcerations.

Adherents.com The site gives 45,000 adherent statistics and religious geography citations. Based on primary data from census and statistical samples, the site is for researchers on all levels of expertise. Finding the number of participants in any religion is difficult because of various ways of counting and recording. This site is the best resource anywhere in my experience.

Sitesatlas The importance of maps in gaining perspective on present and historic religious life has been overlooked. This site, based in Switzerland, offer instant access to maps that cover the globe. A special resource for students.

Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance Presents many sides of religious viewpoints on issues of the day. Links to an wide variety of sources on religions of the world are provided.

World Religion Resources Sites of interest are highlighted month by month.

AllRefer Reference and Health Resource A gathering of information and links including religion.

Religion-online Links to full text of books on religion. The focus is Christian resources.

---

Religious Worlds Sources for Study of Religions.

Foods of Religions A list of selected sites that present great foods of various traditions.

Ancient World Cultures An on line introduction to ancient world cultures.

Education UK portal site Comprehensive site for those interesting in studying a UK course.

Library.co.il Academic resources from all over the world.

OyMap.com—a world directory

Alcwin.org—An educational portal Source of Educational Information. Includes info for children.

Innvista—Information on culture, health, science and society.

CUPA-HR—College and University Professional Association—Articles and Resources for members.

Explore Faith—Spiritual guidelines for anyone seeking a path to God.

Missouri College—Business, Health Care and Visual Communications courses available.

SocietyDirectory.org / Religion and Spirituality—Religion and Spirituality Web Directory.

Conversational French—Study French in France at Accord language schools.

Science Projects for Kids—Easy and fun science projects for home and science fair.

Bnei Baruch Center for Kabbalah Studies—Kabbalah lessons, courses, books, music and more.

Online Language Classes—Find teachers for Español, English, Français, Deutsch.

Boa Lingua—Sprachreisen/Sprachaufenthalt weltweit—Swiss language school provider.

Learn Languages Worldwide -Overseas courses, certificate prep courses, paid and volunteer jobs.

Language Studies Abroad—Language schools for juniors, adults, executives.

Birthright Israel—Offer of a free trip to Israel funded by Taglit-birthright Israel gift.



## **MEDIA**

Media Reviews Comments on media productions related to Interfaith issues.

Religion and Ethics: BBC Religion pages The news of religion with a UK perspective.

Beliefnet. A religious news and information site that provides a variety of stories as well as sources of information on world religions.

Religion News Service Source for news of religion, ethics, spirituality and moral issues. A religious observances calendar is also included. A good place to find up to date news of religion.

Religion and Ethics Newsweekly Each week a significant sacred time is highlighted along with the prime newsworthy events of the religious world. The television version, aired weekly, displays professional reporting and high quality presentation..

Faith and Values Interfaith calendar information is included in this wide ranging religion section in the Saturday edition of the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

The Jewish Week—Jewish and Israel daily news and commentary.

Metropolitan Media of the Australian Associated Press—AAP Medianet news release distribution

Solaria SL. Invertir en Energia Solar, Huertas Solares Inversiones en energia solar, asesoramiento energia solar, venta paneles fotovoltaicos, proyectos solar, huertas solares.

Spiritbreak.com—Faith and Values Media inspirational video clips.

Fotosearch Image Search Engine—Search over 90 top stock photo and image sources.

Promotional and Garden Calendars—Calendar World—a premier source for Custom Calendars

Top Latest Songs—Troova Online Community—Indian Pakistani english audio video media.

## **TRAVEL**

Birmingham, UK, airport information—A source for people traveling to visit sacred sites in the UK. The site is a guide to airport arrivals, parking, hotels, departures, facilities and news.

Pilgrimage Services—A variety of services needed by persons planning a pilgrimage.

---

Religious Sites—This site offers a variety of map resources that can help place religions geographically.

Quick Set Up and Mountaineering Tents—The Xia Men Jiao Xia Trade Co. of China provides world wide

service for custom made tents. Pilgrimage Travelers may need such a service.

Sacred Journeys for Women—Tours, pilgrimages and travel necessities.

Bucharest Hotels, Reservations, Romania!—Accommodations for travelers and pilgrims.

Gatwick Airport guide—Information on arrivals, parking, hotels, departures, airline information.

HotelMesh—A growing site with hotel listings primarily in Europe.

India Tours—A comprehensive Travel and Hotel Guide to India

World Maps and Flags—plus information on countries and travel helps.

Travel Florida—Online guide to Florida, Best Florida hotels, attractions, maps, pictures, and more.

Germany—Online Germany travel guide including museums, hotels, where to eat, transportation, weather.

Istanbul Hotels—Hotels, sightseeing tours, Anatolian tours.

Car Rental in South Africa—Car rental and accommodations in South Africa.

Budapest Hotels—Reservation services for hotels, apartments and pensions.

Hotel Reservations Italy.—Resources for travel in Italy

Hotel Reservations in Hungary—Budapest Hotels. Reservations. Hungary!

Retreat at Jaipur, India—Savista Resort and Retreat at Jaipur.

Filcoo Travel Links—Italy bed and breakfast and hotels

Los Angeles Downtown Hotels—Rates on over 25 hotels in the downtown LA area.

Budapest—Information. Budapest Hotel Reservation

Vacation Rentals—Organisation of vacation rental owners

Queens Hotel in Leeds—A famous, elegant four-star hotel.



100 per cent German Places—All about destinations in Germany.

Australia hotels—Stamford luxury hotels and resorts at Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and more cities.

Luxury Vacation Rentals—US, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean vacation rentals by owners.

Chesford Grange Hotel in Warwick UK—Hotel in Shakespeare country.

Adventure Vacation Patagonia—Mix adventure and pilgrimage in the Futaleufu River region.

Casas Rurales en Valencia—Milla de Ayora Alojamiento Rural

Alojamientos Rurales—Rural Lodging Villa in Ayora

Travel Egypt—Guide and tourist information including Nile cruises and historic tours.

Italy—Travel information for each region and main tourist cities.

The Westerwood Hotel near Glasgow, Scotland—A fine hotel in a historic location.

The Biltmore House and Estate at Ashville, North Carolina, USA—historic site with year-round appeal.

Sacred Britain Tours—Explore ancient sacred sites of England and Scotland.

Online Booking for Hotels—Cheap and Luxury—A listing with worldwide variety.

Cape Cod Directory—Visitor information with rental and vacation directory.

Marinas—Directory of marinas through the United States and abroad.

Arizona Guest Ranch—Hidden Meadows Ranch in Arizona White Mountains—log cabins.

Four Seasons Luxury Hotel in Sydney—Overlooking Sydney Harbour in the historic Rocks district.

4YouHotels—Information about hotels in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal.

Bangkok Wedding—Four Seasons Hotel wedding services.

EuroBookings—Hungary Hotel Reservations.

Brisbane Hotels—At Flight Centre choose hotels in 111 Australia cities.

Ski Apartment in Bansko—Bulgarian development apartments for holiday home or investment.

Holiday Ramber RVs—Large inventory at low pricing.

Hotels B&B Restaurants in Italy—Directory of hotels, B&Bs, catering, travel and tourist sites.

Istanbul Hotels Site—Find hotels and city tours in Istanbul and all over Turkey.

Four Seasons Resort—In the Andaman Sea on an archipelago of 99 islands. Weddings site.

Hotel de la Paix Tour Eiffel—The official site of the Hotel Paix Tour Eiffel

Hotel Riviera—Official site of the Hotel Riviera in Paris

Damascus Weddings—Four Season Hotel flexible venues, fine cuisine and expert planning.

Hotels in Vienna—Hotel accommodation booking website for Vienna hotel and apartment.

World Hotels and Travel Guide—Reservations and world travel guide—budget tips.

Egypt Hotels—Book luxurious and budget hotels online with SafariEgypt.

Arizona Guest Ranch—Log Cabins—Hidden Meadow Ranch in Arizona White Mountains.

Hawaii Vacation—Hawaii vacation rental home, condo, villa or apartments.

Belize Vacations and Travel—All inclusive Belize travel packages.

Rajasthan Tour Packages—Tour travel operator and agents in Rajasthan, India

Georgia Vacation Rentals—Luxury rentals by owner—high standards.

Asheville vacation rentals—Asheville, USA, vacation rentals and interactive map of region.

Frankfurt Hotels—Find hotels in Frankfurt am Main.

New Orleans Hotel Guide—Hotels of New Orleans list by economic development corp. of the City.

Cesky Krumlov Hotels Directory—Accommodations in Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic

Jacksonville Apartments for Rent—Villages of Baymeadows Apartments virtual tours.

Bed and Breakfasts in Belgium and Netherlands—Portal site with google maps.

Health Insurance Canada visitors—Health insurance quotes for free.

Dubai Apartments—Dubai villas, hotels and apartments.

St Thomas Vacation Condos—Virgin Islands holiday resources.

Remunda Village India—Tourist destination at Remunda, state of Orissa.

Health Value Travel—Health care industry matches up with tourism to benefit people.

Buy Apartment in Spain—Properties on the cost at best market prices.

Niagara Falls Hotel—Embassy Suites Hotel overlooking Niagara Falls.

India Travel Resource—I Discover India offers many traveler services.

Alaska Flightseeing Tours—Rust's Flying Service providing fishing trips and more.

Prague Airport Transfer—Airport transfer in Prague.

UK Lake District Hotels—Appleby Manor Country House. Relaxed and friendly.

Hidden Vacations—Large selection of vacation sites.

Cheap Travel Insurance—Variety of cheap travel insurance policies.

Volki Gotama—Volki Gotama skies, Rossignol, Salomon, Nordica and more.

Mission Travel—A Christian owned and operated online travel ministry.

Royal India Travel—North India tour packages customised for the traveler.

New Car Leasing UK—Contract hire and car leasing company at Flexible Car leasing.

Fairbanks, Alaska lodging—Pikes Waterfront Lodge and Alaska restaurants.

Rajasthan Tour—India tours—palaces, forts, sand dunes and more.

---

EF Sprachkreisen-Switzerland—Language travel worldwide.

India City Guide—Reviews and opinions of restaurants and shops from all parts of India.

Discount Hotels—Cheap hotels worldwide—free maps.

TGD—Holidays in Spain, Travel Guide, Family Holidays in Spain.

Car Leasing London—Specialise in UK 6 and 12 month leasing for business and personal.

Mallorca—Holidays in Mallorca, Spain, and Travel in Mallorca.

Downtown Little Rock Hotels—Find hotels in Little Rock, AR, USA

Miami Hotel—The Clay Hotel located at Española Way and Washington Avenue.

Luxury Apartments—Serviced apartments in London and Parish—small businesses to corporate.

Dubai Apartments—Hotel Apartments in Dubai.

Rajasthan India Tourism—Tour packages for Rajasthan—heritage, desert safari, royal and others.

Properties on the Mediterranean—Empresa dedicada a la venta de viviendas de calidad en la costa mediterranea.

Los Angeles International Airport, LAX—Flight status information, parking, airlines locations, terminal map.

Holiday Rambler RV's for Sale—Huge inventory at low pricing from a known Holiday RV dealer.

India Nightlife Resources—Reviews and opinions of restaurants, stores, shops and entertainment.

Cabanas Information—Information on different types and styles of cabanas.

## **GREETING CARDS AND ART**

### **Greeting Cards**

First Communion Invitation Cards—Taylor card provides an assortment of cards on First Communion,

Baptism and more.

Holy Day and Holiday Greeting Cards—Greetings and E Cards for a wide variety of special days.

Greetings—Greetings cards representing many world religions. Electronic cards are available at this site. Tasteful and appropriate designs.

GreetingsnEcards.com—Free eCards, Greeting Cards—cards for birthdays, friendship greetings.

GooglyGreetings.com—Free eCards. Greeting Cards, Birthday cards. Friendship Greetings.

Ecards for selected major religious festivals. From the BBC Religion and Ethics Interactive website.

Good Friday Ecards Various Good Friday and other Christianity oriented ecards..

Greetings Holi card—A variety of greeting cards that are colourful and bright. Holi and other occasions.

Easter-Cards—Easter e-cards, recipes and jokes.

Holi Festival ecards Colourful ecards for the festival of Holi.

100Free-Ecards Religious cards—A variety of light hearted religion based greeting cards.

India Greeting Cards—A variety of religious and other greeting ecards for Hindu holy days.

Jewish Baby Names—Also links to Jewish alphabet and calendar.

Barmitzvah Gifts—Just what the name says.

Sendfreebirthdaycards An interesting collection of cards including religious cards.

Firstfree-ecards Card with focus on birthdays.

Free Animated Ecards—A broad variety of animated card focused on birthdays.

Free Printable—Free printable greeting cards, colouring pages, calendars, drawings

BestBirthday Cards Free e-card site.

Christianity Greetings Ecard site for Christianity and other religions

Hindu Festival Greetings A variety of Hindu festival greetings.

Free Dussehra Greeting Cards—Dussehra celebrates the victory of good over evil.

Wedding Resources—Invitations, decorations, gifts and more for weddings.

---

Seasons-Greetings cards—Variety of seasonal greeting free ecards.

Free eGreeting cards—A wide variety of email greeting cards.

Free E-Cards Online—A collection of free electronic greeting cards.

Printable Greeting Cards—Free printable cards and more resources.

Good Friday Cards—A variety of Christian cards available.

Higreetings—Free Bengali New Year eCards, Poila Baishak Greeting Cards

Islam—E cards for Islamic sacred times.

Holiday E cards—Cards for various holy days and others.

US Memorial Day Cards—Suitable cards for this day and others.

Ramadan ECards—A variety of resources on observance of Ramadan.

Rakhi Greetings—Greetings for the brother-sister festival in India.

Eid cards—A variety of online cards for Eid observers.

Christian Greeting Cards—Free ecards for various Christian occasions.

Christianity E Cards—Cards for reaching out to dear ones.

Diwali Cards—Personalise and preview Diwali cards.

Islamic Greeting Cards—Source for sending the blessings of Allah to loved ones.

Jewish Greeting Cards—Express the Jewish belief in a single All Knowing Divinity.

Wedding Invitations—Custom designed and printed wedding invitations.

Christmas Wishes—Free Christmas wishes and greetings for friends and loved ones.

Happy New Year Ecards—Celebrate the New Year by sending free cards and greetings.

### **Art and Gift Resources for Home, Education and Business**

Thinplace Inc—Diverse expressions of worldwide sacred art and objects. A primary focus on five major faith traditions and tribal art. Collectible and non-collectible art, folk art, prayer aids and other objects.

Canvas Prints and Posters—Resources for home decoration using fine art prints and posters.



Covenant Arts A commercial site offering the arts as an expression of Christian faith. Personalised Holy Bibles in King James Version and Catholic New American in both English and Spanish. Gifts for weddings, christenings, first communions, born again celebrations, anniversaries, and as family heirlooms.

Planet Ichthus Religious Gifts and Jewelry—Religious gifts, Crosses, Rings, T-shirts, Home Decor and more. Free shipping.

Magnetic Picture Frames—Frames to enhance pictures that educate and entertain.

John Bennett Fine Paintings—Fine English and European paintings art gallery in Walton Street, London, UK

The Canon Gallery, Petworth—Suppliers of paintings, watercolours, sculptures and modern furniture. Art dealers, painting restoration, Insurance Valuations, sales of bronzes and furniture in Petworth, UK.

The Academy of Art University—Fine arts college offering on campus and online fine arts degree courses.

Flyerstarter.com—Royalty free photo graphics and digital art. On line consignment store.

Seagrass area rugs—Natural floor coverings that are inexpensive.

Custom Tags Tags for home and office that can be adapted to religious purposes and reminders

All Cross Stitch—Cross stitch patterns that can be used to create home decoration items.

Holyland Wholesale—Holy Land Christian oriented gifts and souvenirs.

Personalised Gifts—Gifts for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries.

Silver Beads from India—Karma Enterprise dealing in Sterling Silver Jewelry.

Cross Stitch Centre—Needlecraft including cards and samplers for births, christenings and weddings. Religious designs.

Gift Baskets—Over 1300 gift basket choices

Home Theater Information: LCD or Plasma? Choosing the best audio video system.

Manufactures of Silver Beads—A leader in export of Silver Beads, 92.5 Silver Beads.

Send gifts to India—Chose from variety of gifts and flowers.

---

Customised Gifts—State-of-the art Gift Customised tool for personalising gifts.

Fashion Jewellery Exporter—Meera Jewels provides handmade beaded jewelry and more.

Nature Gift Store—Gifts and pictures of wildlife nature art.

Sterling Silver Watches—Silvermoonjewels is an online source for sterling silver watches.

Yiotas XStitch—Fine art and Victorian cross stitch charts patterns to download.

Sterling Silver Necklaces—Shop QVJ offers new and classical styles of Sterling Silver jewelry.

Corporate Gift Baskets—Baby gift baskets.

Gold Necklace- Hundreds of styles of bracelets, necklaces and earring at Guvy.

## **PERSONAL RESOURCES**

India Florist Association—Send fresh flowers through out India—a network of 75 top florist shops.

Villeroy and Boch—Dealers in fine dinnerware by Herend, Spode, Royal Worcestor and others that can enhance many religious celebrations.

Web Cam Resources—Links to web cams at or in the area of sacred sites.

My 50: Things to do in my lifetime A site offering frameworks for persons to spell out their life intentions along with deadlines. Great help to a more blessed life.

World Prayers—A gathering of prayers by visionary spiritual leaders of many religions.

Spirituality.com A gathering of spirituality resources from a Christian Science perspective.

Multifaith Calendar A print format calendar produced at Vancouver, Canada

Interfaith Wedding Mall—An interesting resource for people who choose to marry and bring two different religious traditions to the scene. Practical helps. Good book listing included.

CoNexus Interfaith Resources—A variety of books, posters, and other resources are available. The Golden Rule Poster has taken on a special meaning since the 9-11 event.

Life Insurance Policy—Information on various insurance policies.

Moving Companies—Worldwide moving companies directory and moving guide.

Integrity Christian Singles Network—Online source for Christian Singles Dating.

Dropship Wholesaler in China—Art, iPod, DVD players and more in small quantities.

Decorating Resources—Style Center offering information and products for home decorating.

Natural Contemporary Rugs—Source for natural fiber area rugs in the USA. Sisal, Seagrass, Oriental, Persian, Wool, pads.

Love Poems and Quotes—Just what it says—nicely done.

Blinds Chalet—Attractive, high quality, durable window coverings.

Home Improvement Steps—Variety of resources for home improvements.

Home Alarm Systems—Do- It -Yourself alarm system installation

Alarm Systems DSC Ademco GE—Alarm systems and equipment. Free support.

Area Rugs Information—A home expresses personality—rugs enhance your plan.

Entrance Mats—High quality entrance mats to enhance indoor and outdoor entry ways.

Small Folding Tables—Custom made by Midg-ett.

Canadian Pharmacy—A Canadian mail order pharmacy for prescription drugs.

Health Directory of Canada—A directory of private clinics and health care centers in Canada.

Fabric Shower Curtains—Fabric, Vinyl and PVC shower curtains plus rugs and mats.

Platform Beds—Online furniture store—platform beds in varied styles and finishes.

Los Angeles California Movers—Get multiple quotes online from professional movers in Los Angeles.

e-Samsara.com—Tools for relaxation, meditation and well-being based on Oriental philosophy.

Leathertree.com—Wide variety of leather accessories—briefcases, wallets, and more.

Lotus Path Workshops—Workshops integrating Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism and other traditions.

Miami Moving Companies—Compare movers in Miami, FL, USA.

Furnished Apartments for Rent—A large variety of apartments including corporate and luxury rentals.

Directory of Canadian Pharmacies—For online prescription purchasing information.

LeatherTree.com—All leather accessories—free shipping..

Office Furniture and Supplies—Office furniture, Chairs, Desk, Inks, Printers....

Cheap International Calls—Call abroad and home for less.

Mobile Phones—Compare and buy cheap mobile phones in UK.

Eco-Furniture—Eco friendly web retailer of bedroom and dining room furniture.

Tapestries—European Tapestry collection. Wholesale enquiries welcome.

Fire Damage Service—Nationwide Fire damage restoration and cleanup services.

Antique Oak Furniture—UK based—antique oak dressers, refectory tables, and more.

Home Networking Advisor—Home audio network resource.

Shag Rugs and Carpets—Natural Home rugs in many colours and sizes.

Wedding Gifts—Gifts for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and more.

Italian Fashion School Florence—Accademia Italiana is centered on interior and product design.

Health Value Travel—The global phenomenon of Health and Medical Tourism

Carson City Real Estate—Agent Dan Laporte featured.

Decor South—Furniture, home furnishings and decor for bedroom, living room, dining room and kitchen.

Community Forum—A wide community with many categories.

Fine Marine Canvas—Select fabric colour awnings—marine canvas.

Lake Tahoe Wedding Association—Information to plan a Lake Tahoe wedding.

Outdoor Carpet—Comprehensive selection of Outdoor Carpets, Doormats and Rugs.

Wholesale Salt Lamps—Importer and wholesaler of Himalayan Salt Products including lamps.

Luxury Duvet Covers—Christy Towels offers bed linen, duvet covers, bedding and accessories.

Online Shopping—Bargains and values on many products.

Affenpinscher Dog Breed—Small sized Affenpinscher lovable play dogs.

SuperFit—Routines and resources for healthy workouts.

Alcazar Furniture—Quality home and office furniture.

Medical Tourism in India—Affordable prices and high quality care.

Graphic Arts Design—Launch a career in graphic arts design.

Kitchen Designs—Kitchen design and installation in the Sydney area of Australia.

Panic bars—Experts on panic bars for doors needing security.

Switches—Pressure, Rotary and Micro Switch information and products.

Movers—Worldwide movers directory with guide and tips.

Online Pharmacy—Specific information for Ontario and all Canada.

Mattress—A UK online mattress shop—any style of bed.

Adjustable Beds Perfect for the Elderly—Also for people with health problems.

Royal paper shredder—Shredder for home and office at reasonable price.

Tej Kohli Mission—A philanthropic mission in Costa Rica.

Tattoo Designs—Galleries of free tattoo designs, new ideas—search, etc.

Los Angeles Apartments—Apartments for rent in LA—50,000+ listings.

Duffel Sports Bag Online—Sports Bags, Golf Travel Bags, Laptop bags, and more.

---

Nostar Telephones Los Angeles—Phones with multi line features for people who move around in the city.

Fashion Handbags—Different colours and styles and fabric with overlaid images.

Blissful Self—Sources for personal development and bliss.

Volunteering in Australia—Volunteering Australia opens the door to opportunities.

Whistler Real Estate—Maggie Thornhill and Associates—Whistler, BC, Canada real estate specialists.

Toronto Townhomes—Townhouse profiles with photographs and Google map of locations.

Utah Residential Movers—Commercial and residential movers in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Art Paintings, Sculptures, Jewelry—UK based contemporary art gallery.

Bathroom Cabinets—US Home Products assist home renovation—kitchen and bathroom products.

## **BUSINESS AND CAREER RESOURCES**

An Employer's Guide to Religious Accommodation Document (PDF) presents issues often faced by employers. Helpful suggestions assist in reaching fair conclusions.

Pilgrimage Resources—Links to travel and other pilgrimage necessity services.

Work Practices—A description of various work regulations in world religions.

Call Enter Forums—Call Center discussion forums about the processes involved.

Software Development Outsourcing—Application Development outsourcing company in India.

Seagrass area rugs—Natural floor coverings that are inexpensive

Fixed Asset Labels—Discount bar code asset labels and fixed asset tracking asset labels.

Dropship Wholesaler—Worldwide Wholesale art, ipod, car alarm, dvd players, ink cartridge wholesaler from China in small quantity.

Resume Templates—Resume and cover templates to download, writing tips, and interview guide.



MBA—Worldwide directory of MBA programmes and business schools.

Used Office Furniture—Furniture, office planning and design, and installation of used office furniture.

Lanyard Manufacturers—Label and packaging products—neck lanyards, badges and more.

Mobile Phones UK—Online mobile phone shop for latest deals in the UK.

Top Ten Ranking MBA Programme—Chicago GSB offers full range of MBA programmes.

Alarm Forum—Home Security systems and other alarm necessities.

Calibration Labels—Wide variety of expertly designed labels.

Missouri College in St. Louis—Offers students career-oriented training through in Business, Health Care, Information Technology (IT), Massage Therapy and Visual Communications programmes.

CFD Market—Information from an Australia perspective—also training and account support.

Ecommerce Business Solutions—Solutions to setting up ecommerce websites.

BE Technical—Website development and promotion resource.

Medisoft—Medical Billing software for Private Practices and billing services.

New York Moving companies—Get multiple moving quotes online from professional New York moving companies.

Custom Ecommerce Solutions—Templates and other ecommerce necessities at the Easy Ecommerce store.

Kitchen Design—A company that ships nationwide and the UK—quality wood kitchen cabinetry.

Custom Printed Tags—Broad range of custom tags online.

California Labour Law Digest—Comprehensive resource for California and federal labour law. Labour Law kit available.

MySecuritySign.com—Create customised Security Signs Online. Fast delivery.

UK Land Investments—Purchase land for same from UK Land Investments Group.

UKLI Land News—Late news, analysis and research on land sales/investments in theUK.

Custom Printed Tags—Quality custom printed tags online at low prices.

Custom Door Signs—Door signs including braille signs and bathroom door signs.

UK Wholesale Supplies—Verified wholesale suppliers, importers, dropshippers world wide.

Sony Ericsson Unlock—Mobile online unlocking package from UK.

Atlanta Georgia Real Estate—Crye-Leike is a leading Mid-South real estate company.

Arkadia—International real estate classified ads from persons to buy, sell or rent properties.

Mobile Phone Accessories—Variety of phone accessories.

Itransition Softward Development—Offshore software development company.

Website Design and Development—Website building tools from ECOMMIND. HTML, XML and more.

Aspire Marketing Group—Business to Business lead generation experts.

Order Checks—Online source for checks at an affordable price.

4 Star Electronics—Obsolete Semiconductor, Electronic Component Supplier.

Laptop Rentals—Computer rentals by Rent Fusion of Chicago, USA

Leadgener8.com—Generate business leads in search engines and telemarketing.

International Property—Property Frontiers—advice on investing in overseas properties.

Nokia Accessories—Fommy.com—a complete wireless superstore.

Hang Tag Design—Specialists in production of labels such as hang and swing tickets.

Metal Buildings—Information on steel buildings and metals.

Custom Parking tags—Library of parking permit designs and personalization options.

Steel Buildings—Latest information on steel building industry and its needs.

No Parking Signs—Stock and custom design signs available at competitive costs.

Metal Buildings Shopper—To quality steel at competitive prices.

Internet Website Design—Specialising in profitable Web presence.

Colour Copiers—JTF Business Systems distributes digital copiers, etc.

Shared Calendar—Relenta is a customer relationship management tool for small businesses.

Nostar Telephones Vancouver—Telecommunications wholesale distributor and service provider.

GSA Government—Federal Schedules specialise in delivering timely GSA contract awards for our clients.

House in Bangalore—PrestigeConstruction deals in real estate and property in Bangalore.

Treo Accessories—Wireless superstore providing Treo accessories—batteries, cases, chargers, etc.

UV10—Economic and political news of Brazil plus investment information.

Affiliate Marketing India—BrainPlus India—Affiliate Marketing services—build networks.

SEO India—Internet marketing and search engine optimization in India, UK, USA, Canada, Australia.

San Diego Web Design—Differentiate your business online.

UK Jobs—Search thousands of UK jobs from recruiters and employers.

Toronto Signs—Toronto Signs Promotional and Retail signs.

LCD Projectors—Saville Audio Studios provide Videoconferencing, projector lamps, and more resources.

Metal Buildings—Custom steel buildings by Gensteel.

Steam traps—Steam traps

Business Electricity Savings—Switching business electricity suppliers made easy in the UK

Pressure, Rotary, Micro Switches—Machine Design offers engineer information.

---

Custom Binders—Custom, poly, vinyl binders, calendar, check book covers.

Electric Motors, Stepper Motors, AC and DC Motors—Machine Design provides engineers with detailed information.

Hang Tag—Specialist in promotion of labels such as hang tag and swing ticket.

Holiday Cards from CardsDirect—Holiday cards for all business needs. Fully customizable.

Membrane Switch—JN White manufactures and provides rapid prototyping of membrane switches, panels and overlays.

CAD CAM Software—PunchCad offers CAD/CAM software for drafting, modeling, milling and molds.

Nameplates—Custom and Professional Nameplates.

Steel Buildings—Steel Buildings and Steel Building experts at City Steel Buildings.

Investment Condos Toronto—Free condo guide—Toronto condos and investment properties.

Tamper Proof Labels—Help prevent fraud, counterfeits or mischievous disruption of calibration procedures.

Signature Stamps—Xpresstamps produce good resolution and accurate Your Own Signature stamps.

Ball and Linear Bearings—Machine design provides engineers information on bearings.

## **SEARCH RESOURCES**

Frety.net—A web directory with homepage thumbnails

YoY-search—A web portal with ten types of search

Zepti search—A search engine of interest.

Search Engine optimization—Resources for improving search engine usage.

DirPedia—Site combines dictionary, encyclopedia and web directory.

TopSiteSeeker—Business solutions

SEO Website Promotion Services—Link building Services India. Search engine marketing.

Search Engine Optimization Company—Provider of Search Engine Optimization resources and marketing.

Megarankings Inc—Search engine optimization ranking offering pay per click management, etc.

Greatest Search Engines in the World—Easy to use powerful search site.

Seotonic.com—Website optimization and search engine submission resource. Affordable.

Search Engine Positioning—Traffic building solutions.

Ajee.com—A websites directory

Fotosearch Image Search Engine—Search 90 top stock photography and image sources.

### **THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE**

The Interfaith Alliance (TIA) is a 501(c)(4) nonpartisan advocacy organisation. Founded in 1994 to challenge the radical religious right, TIA remains committed to promoting the positive and healing role of religion in public life by encouraging civic participation, facilitating community activism, and challenging religious political extremism.

Today, TIA is 185,000 members strong. Our supporters are people of faith, goodwill, and conscience drawn from more than 75 different religions and belief systems, including individuals who ascribe to no faith tradition. TIA's grassroots base now includes 75 local activist groups in communities across the country and an extensive online action network.

TIA strives to protect both the sanctity of religion and the integrity of government. As religion and the United States government become increasingly entangled, faith is being manipulated to influence policy and advance political strategy. As a result, religion's power to unite and heal is being severely compromised in order to accomplish partisan objectives.

TIA and our members work to ensure that America is a nation where religious belief and practice are free and voluntary, and that the government does not favour or discriminate against citizens based on their religious belief or non-belief.

TIA provides counsel to elected officials and the media regarding the most urgent religious liberty concerns facing our nation. TIA mobilises its national grassroots movement—from city halls to Capitol Hill—to advocate for religious liberty in America.

---

## THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE FOUNDATION

The Interfaith Alliance Foundation (TIAF) works in close partnership with The Interfaith Alliance. A 501(c)(3) non-partisan educational organisation, TIAF shares TIA's mission of promoting the positive and healing role of religion in public life, but conducts its work through research, education, and civil discourse.

TIAF is committed to informing the public about our nation's long-standing commitment to religious freedom and current issues at the intersection of religion and politics.

Through training, publications, educational initiatives, and research TIAF works to increase understanding about the religious liberty clause in the First Amendment to the Constitution and its relevance in today's political process.

## INTERFAITH ALLIANCE IN UK

The Interfaith Alliance UK is a charitable inter-religious organisation in the United Kingdom, which operates as, "A family of people united in friendship, from diverse progressive and liberal faith communities, working together to promote the love of the One Same God, witnessed in social justice and parity of esteem for all God's children, regardless of race, gender, creed, disability, orientation, social or economic status".

The Interfaith Alliance UK is independent of The Interfaith Alliance in the United States, but is founded on similar principles. The Interfaith Alliance UK is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of clergy and lay people drawn from diverse faith backgrounds, and the organisation is fundamentally defined by the binding principles which are expressed in its *Covenant of Shared Beliefs*:

We in the Alliance bear witness in the Name of God, who is Compassionate and Merciful, that:

1. The Eternal One is our God, the Eternal God is One, and we strive to love the Eternal One with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength. We strive to love our neighbour as ourself and to build between us bonds of friendship, care and mutual support.

2. We affirm resolutely and revere the shared truths and common ground that unite our diverse faiths, in deed as well as in word and thought.

3. We affirm unequivocally and honour the clear differences of belief and practice between us, which should not in any way be diminished or undermined; and we acknowledge the diverse views



within our communities about the existence of many religions in our world.

4. We reject absolutely and entirely any doctrine whereby believers of other faiths and traditions among us are condemned to eternal loss.

5. We affirm the godly imperative and freedom to bear witness to our religious beliefs before others with gentleness and respect, and the right of a person freely to change or to challenge religion. However, we resolutely oppose any form of proselytisation or influence that is dishonest, coercive, psychologically manipulative, based on unfair advantage given to any particular religion, or insulting to other faith communities, or that targets members of any particular faith community for conversion.

6. We affirm that there is no compulsion in religion, and by reason of the paramount sanctity of human life, we entirely oppose the use of violence in the pursuit of religious ends, or under the pretext of religion.

7. We affirm that all people, created in the image of God, are absolutely equal in the sight of God, and we seek full protection of their due rights under the law, regardless of gender, ethnicity, national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, age, or social and economic status.

8. We affirm the sanctity of the family and marriage, wherein adults of consenting age, of the same sexes or of opposite sexes, freely commit themselves to one another in faithful and lifelong union, giving expression to that commitment in mutual care, sharing and comfort for one another, physical love, and if they choose, parenthood.

9. We affirm the commitment to social justice as an absolute religious duty, whereby a living faith must be witnessed in bold social action toward the elimination of poverty, injustice, prejudice and discrimination, and toward the fair and equitable distribution of resources, and access to education and healthcare, both at local and global level.

10. We affirm our humble stewardship and duty of care of the earth, its resources and environment, and in particular its holy places, and we bear clear witness that ownership ultimately belongs to none but God. In this regard, we cite the holy land of Israel-Palestine, sacred alike to Jews, Muslims and Christians, and we strive toward a just and lasting peace for all its people.”

---

The Interfaith Alliance UK has been a firm advocate of progressive and liberal streams within the traditions of different faiths, and has founded the Scriptural Reasoning Society in Great Britain, to promote the shared study of sacred texts between people of different faiths to engender understanding and respect for differences, and to promote shared civic values in our common life as citizens.

The Alliance has also made submissions to government and statutory non-governmental organisations in Great Britain, including the Home Office in regard to legislation on extremism in places of worship, and the General Medical Council in its development of ethical guidance for doctors.

The ideological position of the Interfaith Alliance (UK) has been to challenge extremism and fundamentalism in some forms of Christian Evangelicalism and Islam, and to promote the human rights of persecuted minorities, including traditional Christian minorities which continue to suffer discrimination and constraints on freedom of religion in some Muslim-majority states.

**World Alliance of Interfaith Clergy:** It is an international professional organisation of seminary graduates aligned with interfaith values and ideals.

We promote world peace and a sense of community through education and understanding among all people. We provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of issues among interfaith clergy, interfaith seminary students, and all clergy and private citizens aligned with interfaith values and principles.

We provide information to the public about what it means to live with interfaith beliefs and practices, where to find spiritual and religious services provided by individual interfaith clergy, and how to find training as an interfaith minister.

## THE INTERFAITH CENTER

The Interfaith Center at the Presidio was created “to welcome, serve, and celebrate the diverse spiritual wisdom and faith traditions of the Bay Area.” The Center is networked globally with hundreds of interfaith groups in 50 countries who share a common commitment...*to promote daily, enduring interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the Earth and all living beings.*

Twenty-two Bay Area interfaith groups currently are Sponsoring Organisations. The Center’s core activities are...

- Providing hospitality at the interfaith Main Post Chapel,
- Developing local and global connections, and
- Creating interfaith learning environments and resources.

### **OFFERING HOSPITALITY**

The Interfaith Center was invited into the Presidio in the first place to provide hospitality for the Main Post Chapel. Hospitality seems intrinsic to grassroots interfaith relationships and has provided a financial foundation for the Center.

Public open houses are held six or seven times each week are held at the Chapel, part of nearly 100 events each month.

Interfaith weddings and multi-faith gatherings are everyday activities at the Chapel.

Presidio Interfaith History—Groups visiting the Presidio can arrange for a tour of the park focusing on the rich multi-faith history of the site.

### **CONCERTS AT THE MAIN POST CHAPEL**

Enjoy some music in the Chapel—come to a scheduled event or hold a recital, concert, or benefit yourself!

To the delight of musicians, poets, and audio artists of all kinds, acoustics in the Presidio's Main Post Chapel are superb. The two-story mission-style sanctuary and rounded chancel come alive with sound. Artists of every discipline—keyboard, drums, wind, voice and strings—find the Chapel a friendly partner in their work and creation.

### **SECURING SACRED SPACE**

The Chapel boasts two acoustic instruments—a mammoth pipe organ and a grand piano. Up to 20 musicians can perform in the chancel at the same time. Microphones and folding chairs are available. The Sanctuary seats 150-160 and there is plenty of free parking.

### **PROMOTING BAY AREA INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES**

The Center's founders hoped to create a Bay Area umbrella organisation, and to that end the Center organises and cooperates in all sorts of collaborative events and programmes. These activities generate a variety of opportunities for the Bay Area's interfaith community as a whole to develop. Active relationships are maintained with local faith and interfaith organisations, many of whom have become partners in the programmes mentioned below. Methodists,

---

Mormons, and Muslims have all used the Chapel, to name but three traditions, and a number of interfaith programmes receive multiple sponsorship. Local members of the United Religions Initiative and the Parliament of the World's Religions have both regularly used the Chapel and the Center's collaborative support.

### **Special Projects**

Bringing the Global Ethic Home—The Interfaith Center is partnering with The Bridge (a United Religions Initiative circle promoting the Parliament of the World's Religions' agenda and interests) to sponsor a Bay Area-wide 24-month effort, inviting groups of all kinds to consider the document "Towards a Global Ethic—An Initial Declaration." This powerful statement calls all religions to take hands in making peace and reducing the suffering in the world, and was affirmed at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. Seventy-five participants from across the Bay Area spent a full day on March 9, 2002, as a planning day for the coming project. Another event followed on October 27.

Beyond Bigotry: Recreating our Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Harmony in a Post-9/11 World—is the last in a series of events promoted by the city of San Francisco in commemoration of September 11, 2001. This interfaith gathering is devoted to considering how we can be transforming agents who proactively nurture friendship, diversity and peacemaking. 52 leaders and members from various faiths participated in the event held at the Jones Memorial Methodist Church on September 17, 2002.

What Do You Believe?—The Interfaith Center serves as fiscal agent and supporter of this 56-minute film, based on interviews with 200 teenagers in the Bay Area. The film premiered in San Francisco's Cowell Auditorium on February 23, 2002. It inquires into the beliefs and practices of young people, with extended portraits of three girls and three boys representing American Indian, Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Pagan traditions. At this writing *What Do You Believe?* is being evaluated by PBS for possible national broadcast. You can learn more about the film and order it from [www.whatdoyoubelieve.org](http://www.whatdoyoubelieve.org).

One Light, Many Mirrors—An Interfaith Festival—Six hundred fifty celebrants came to the Center's first festival, held May 10-11, 2002. It featured an outdoor stage, booths, food, music, drama, a day of programmes in the sanctuary (including Huston Smith and Bishop William Swing in conversation). Concurrently, the day included an interfaith video mini-festival, a popular Interfaith Cafe (for dialogue programmes), and activities for children.

Circles in Motion—Gifts to Share—The Center served as fiscal agent and provided leadership and fundraising for the design team of United Religions Initiative's first North American summit, a five-day event in Salt Lake City in June, 2001. The Center's board and staff were extensively involved for a year; 17 of 200 participants in Salt Lake were ICP connected. In the process a dozen URI Bay Area cooperation circles became connected to the Center.

### **Securing Sacred Space**

In everything at the Interfaith Center, the hope is that we respect each other and the Spirit so that the time and space we share is held safe and sacred. The words below suggest our intuitions about creating sacred space.

Space becomes sacred...

When it honours those who came before us and  
provides safe harbor today,

When it reminds us of larger realities and leads us to inner truths,

When it cradles the musician's prayer and the poet's melody,  
lifting our hearts,

When being there proves healing, nourishing and satisfying.

Sacred space for all peoples and faiths is secured...

When the door is open to all, in mutual respect and goodwill,

When every sacred symbol and spiritual story is welcomed,

When the truths that nurture us do not hinge on making others wrong, When—bridging culture, race, and faith to be human with each other—We creatively appreciate life's blessings and Work collaboratively to improve life for all.

### **INSTITUTE FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

Institute for Inter-religious Dialogue is a non-governmental organisation devoted to dialog among religions throughout the world.

The institute was founded in 2000, following the efforts by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami for promoting dialogs among cultures and civilizations. The academic board of the institute is composed of renowned scholars of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism as well as several prominent experts on philosophy of religion, mysticism and Comparative religion.

The institutes's library of religions has a collection of more than 4000 titles of professional books of religions in different languages.



## **MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Current president of the institute is Mohammad Ali Abtahi, a well-known theologian and former vice president of Iran.

## **WHAT IS IID?**

The Institute of Interfaith Dialog (IID) grew out of the need to address the question, "How can citizens of the world live in peace and harmony?" From this question a conversation took root and began to grow. The founding members of the IID knew from personal experience that a discussion on religion and spirituality did not have to digress into confusion, fighting, and anarchy. On the contrary the founding members understood that peace could be achieved by sharing different perspectives by listening to each other from the space of love, respect, tolerance, mercy, and compassion.

## **Mission of the IID**

The Institute of Interfaith Dialog is a non-profit organisation whose primary goal is to help bring together the communities in order to promote compassion, cooperation, partnership and community service through interfaith dialog and conversation. The IID is dedicated to encouraging the study of the global communities' spiritual traditions from the vantage point of respect, accuracy, and appreciation.

## **Vision of IID**

In its efforts to promote fully expressed dialog within the global community and to maintain its objectivity, the IID does not accept favours nor does it promote any political or government agency be it foreign or domestic. The IID has made a commitment to maintain its stance for compassion and respect with regard to free expression of spirituality throughout communities.

## **Aims of the IID**

The IID has taken a stand that peace on the planet can be achieved within the foreseeable future. The vision of the Institute of Interfaith Dialog is to help unite communities in order that the spirituality of all individuals be heard in a space that is free of dogmatism, criticism, oppression, and fear.

## **Education and IID**

An intrinsic aspect of the IID is to promote the study of world religions and spiritual faiths in order to gain wisdom and knowledge so that people will have a renewed sense of gratitude, and respect for



the spiritual beliefs they hold closest to their hearts. By being in constant communication with other people who have different traditions from their own, we each have the opportunity to refine and appreciate our own beliefs and traditions.

## **THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE**

The Canadian Institute of Interfaith Dialogue (CIID) is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to unite the global communities through interfaith dialogue by sharing the differences and similarities in cultures and religions in an effort to achieve world peace in the foreseeable future.

The Canadian Institute of Interfaith Dialogue (CIID) grew out of the need to address the question, "How can citizens of the world live in peace and harmony?" From this question a conversation took root and began to grow. The founding members of the CIID knew from personal experience that a discussion on religion and spirituality did not have to digress into confusion, fighting, and anarchy. On the contrary the founding members understood that peace could be achieved by sharing different perspectives by listening to each other from the space of love, respect, tolerance, mercy, and compassion.

### **Mission of the CIID**

The Canadian Institute of Interfaith Dialogue is a non-profit, charitable organisation whose primary goal is to help bring communities together to promote compassion, cooperation, partnership and community service through interfaith dialog and conversation. The CIID is dedicated to encouraging the study of the global communities' spiritual traditions from the vantage point of respect, accuracy, and appreciation.

### **Vision of the CIID**

In its efforts to promote fully expressed dialog within the global community and to maintain its objectivity, the CIID does not accept favours nor does it promote any political or government agency be it foreign or domestic. The CIID has made a commitment to maintain its stance for compassion and respect with regards to free expression of spiritual thought throughout its activities.

### **Aims of the CIID**

The CIID has taken a stand that peace on the planet can be achieved within the foreseeable future. The vision of the Canadian Institute of

Interfaith Dialogue is to unite communities in order that the spirituality of all individuals be heard in a space that is free of dogmatism, criticism, oppression, and fear.

### **Education and CIID**

An intrinsic aspect of the CIID is to promote the study of world religions and spiritual faiths in order to gain wisdom and knowledge so that people will have a renewed sense of gratitude, and respect for the spiritual beliefs they hold closest to their hearts. By being in constant communication with other people who have different traditions from their own, we each have the opportunity to refine and appreciate our own beliefs and traditions.

### **THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE**

The Canadian Institute of Interfaith Dialogue (CIID) is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to unite the global communities through interfaith dialogue by sharing the differences and similarities in cultures and religions in an effort to achieve world peace in the foreseeable future.

### **TURKEY TRIP**

The CIID is organising and funding an Interfaith Trip to Turkey. The trip helps discover the historical, cultural and natural beauties of Turkey, a living example of the harmony of different faiths for centuries. For more information, please contact us.

### **CIID HIGHLIGHTS**

The Canadian Institute of Interfaith Dialogue (CIID) Choir made a special guest appearance at Christmas Songfest 2005.

Participating choirs include Britannia United, St. Paul's Presbyterian, St. Remi Catholic, First Unitarian Congregation, St. Martin de Porres, Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral.

### **Strengthening Our Commitment to Peace...**

The Canadian Institute of Interfaith Dialogue came into fruition for the purpose of eradicating the roots of chaos, enmity, and intolerance through conversation and dialogue with people of varying faiths. This was not an easy step to take for as Muslims we understood that by going down the path of forming communities, we would encounter individuals who were quite comfortable with and adept at stoking the

fires of hatred, insecurity, and animosity. When the actions of a few careless and singularly minded individuals, set off a firestorm of global violence by insulting the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), we were yet again reminded that now is the time for all people who love peace, security, and tranquility to stand side by side and shoulder to shoulder.

### **PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

The Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue is a dicastery of the Roman Curia. It was erected by Pope Paul VI on May 19, 1964 as the Secretariat for Non-Christians, and later renamed by Pope John Paul II on June 28, 1988.

The current President of the Council for Inter-religious Dialogue is *His Eminence* Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, who will formally assume this position on September 1, 2007.

### **PROMOTES DIALOGUE**

The PCID is the central office of the Catholic Church for the promotion of inter-religious dialogue in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the declaration *Nostra Aetate*. It has the following responsibilities:

1. to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others religious traditions;
2. to encourage the study of religions;
3. to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue."

The entirely separate Commission for religious Relations with Jews reports to the separate Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. However, the two Councils do cooperate very closely.

### **ARINZE'S PLATFORM**

This post is largely considered to have made Cardinal Francis Arinze's career. Arinze was created cardinal just before taking the post. He then served in various related capacities including the President of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.

He also received honours in this capacity: On 24 October 1999 he received a gold medallion from the International Council of Christians and Jews for his outstanding achievements in interfaith relations. He traveled extensively and became a popular speaker in the United States.

His status also rose within the Church. As a member of the Committee of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 he worked closely with individual bishops and priests throughout the world and further impressed Pope John Paul II, who on 1 October 2002, made him Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. This is considered the fourth highest position in the Roman Catholic Church.

Accordingly leadership of the Council is seen by some as a career-maker in the global Church.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

The activities of the Council today seem focused on communicating on common values and interests to other religious believers and spiritual leaders. It welcomes visitors to Rome, it visits others, runs meetings and publishes “a bulletin, called “Pro Dialogo” three times a year, containing “significant Church texts on dialogue, articles, and news of dialogue activities throughout the world” and an Inter-religious Dialogue Directory.

### **CONTROVERSY**

On 11 March 2006, Pope Benedict XVI placed the PCID under the leadership of the President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, currently *His Eminence* Paul Cardinal Poupard. However, as this was seen as “downgrading” interfaith affairs[1], Pope Benedict again gave the Council its own President.

### **STRUCTURE**

It consists of a decision-making body, an advisory body and executive body.

### **PRESIDENTS OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

- Paolo Marella (19 May 1964—26 Feb 1973)
- Sergio Pignedoli (6 Mar 1973—15 Jun 1980)
- Jean Jadot (27 Jun 1980—8 Apr 1984 )
- Francis Arinze (8 Apr 1984—1 Oct 2002)
- Michael Fitzgerald (1 Oct 2002—15 Feb 2006)
- Paul Poupard (11 Mar 2006—1 September 2007)
- Jean-Louis Tauran (1 September 2007 -)

## INTERFAITH VOICES

Some of the most creative work in spirituality, theology and ethics is happening at the intersection of belief systems. And in a world where denominational loyalties are often entwined with racial, ethnic or nationality groups, and where religious faith is often used (or misused) in the quest for political and military objectives, interfaith dialogue is essential for peace and racial/ethnic harmony worldwide. Interfaith Voices is integral to work for justice and peace in our world.

In addition, the United States is now the most religiously diverse nation on earth. We now have sizeable groups of Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus side by side with Jews and Christians. In addition, there are hundreds of faith traditions represented in smaller numbers. Our American tradition of religious tolerance requires that we understand and respect such traditions.

Interfaith Voices is an important vehicle for doing just that.

### INTERFAITH VOICES MISSION

Interfaith Voices provides engaging and informative discussion on the key public issues of our day through the lenses of many different faith perspectives. We foster religious tolerance and educate our listeners on the broad diversity of religious traditions and viewpoints in the United States.

Our purpose is to promote interfaith understanding through dialogue. We do not proselytize.

We deal with a wide range of issues where theology intersects with public policy, including social justice, war and peace, electoral politics, separation of church (synagogue/mosque, etc.) and state, human rights, sexual and reproductive issues, racial/ethnic discrimination, women's rights and many more. We frequently interview authors of significant books, and we often highlight a faith tradition little known in the United States (e.g., Buddhism, Islam, Haitian Vodou, Sikhism, etc.) From the beginning, we have aired voices and viewpoints seldom heard in other media.

**Lehigh Dialogue Center LDC:** It is a non-profit, non-political organisation that was founded in May 2004 by a group of volunteers comprising of business people, academicians, and students. One of the goals of the Lehigh Dialogue Center is to organise various religious, cultural, social and activities, and conferences among all types of religious and ethnic groups to support and advance the harmony and

cooperation among religions. We aim to promote of understanding of American and Turkish cultures, and to foster integrity through religious, cultural and educational activities. We believe that better integration with local communities will contribute to the peace, prosperity and harmony in our area. We believe getting to know each other will build bridges among our community. We believe that respect to religious plurality and dialogue is key to world peace. To serve the purpose of bridging cultures, and promoting friendship, we would be happy to have your support.

### **LEHIGH DIALOGUE**

Lehigh Dialogue Center was established by Turkish-Americans and its membership base represent s predominantly Citizens of Turkish ethnic background. It is also a Turkish Cultural Center in the Valley to serve the needs of Turkish-Americans. We combine civic and religious organisational structure under the same umbrella.

### **I HAVE AN IDEA. CAN YOU HELP ME?**

We welcome your input and suggestions. If you have an idea that will serve to purpose of dialogue in the Valley, please contact us. We'll do our best to accommodate your request. We want you to be part of the mission of achieving peace and harmony in our community.

### **WHAT ABOUT INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE?**

We not only deal with interfaith dialogue but also strive to achieve intercultural dialogue. As the third millennium gets under way, we find ourselves in a multicultural environment which is both rich in promise and riven with conflicts. We believe conflict resolution can be avoided by engaging intercultural dialogue. We need to recognise differences and multiplicity of the world in which we live.

In an increasingly globalised and interdependent world, where encountering cultural difference can scarcely be avoided, the ability to enter into a respectful dialogue is a vital skill for nations communities, and individuals. We have partnered with Latino Community in Lehigh Valley to achieve this and organised first Latino-Turco Friendship Dinner. It was a great success and received very good feedback. We are planning similar events with other Community Groups.

### **WHY DO WE NEED A DIALOGUE?**

Today's chaotic nature of world affairs is prime example of urgency in need of cooperation, understanding and dialogue. If we examine



each major faith groups, we would realise there are more similarities than differences. Why don't we focus our energy on common issues of interest and engage ourselves in a productive dialogue rather than overemphasising our differences. We can certainly agree to disagree and appreciate each other's unique contribution to our society. By committing ourselves to peace and humanistic ideals, we can seed for a brighter future and leave great estate for future generations. We would also be preventing cult-like marginal groups hijacking humanistic nature of religions and exploiting it for their own distorted agenda.

### **HOW LARGE IS YOUR ORGANISATION?**

We have over 500 Turkish Families in the Lehigh Valley. We also serve Stroudsburg and Scranton area. If you add them all, the number climbs up well over 1000. Our Community is small in comparison to others but very well educated and most has BA and PhD Degrees on various fields. They are very committed and motivated in the dialogue and that is how we are able to organise major events in our regions.

We are happy to have support of other Community Groups in the Valley. They are always welcome to our homes and share a meal with us. We believe every Community Group contributes greatly in strengthening this great Nation of the United States of America.

### **WHAT IS CENTER'S MISSION?**

The Lehigh Dialogue Center [LDC] is a non-profit, non-political organisation. The main mission is to create a true dialogue based on solid philosophy and concrete actions. "Accepting people as they are and respecting them as human being before everything" is motto at the Center. We try to reach out every community and extend friendly hand to provide harmonious life in our society. We aim to promote of understanding of American and Turkish cultures, and to foster integrity through religious, cultural and educational activities. We believe that better integration with local communities will contribute to the peace, prosperity and harmony in our area.

### **WHO FOUNDED DIALOGUE CENTER?**

Lehigh Dialogue Center was established by a group of professionals, academicians and businessmen in 2004. Its membership base is predominantly Turkish-American citizens. They represent a community with a firm belief in the Constitution of United States with a great emphasis on sanctity of life; liberty, democracy and freedom. It also



signifies a community that is able to reconcile traditional Islamic values with modern life and science.

The main premise is Moderation and rooted deeply in Turkish social and political history for thousands of years. Mawlana Jalaladdeen Rumi, or Rumi for short, a spiritual master and poet of the late 13th century has profound impact on Turkish Progressive Islam. A tradition that was described as being based on the philosophy that all creatures should be loved as God's physical reflection and objects of the Creator's own love. There is no place for enemies or "others" in this system.

## IFOR PARTNERS

### Decade

UNESCO is promoting the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). The Decade's mandate stresses the principles of non-violence espoused so strongly during the International Year for the Culture of Peace's (IYCP-2000) but focuses increasingly upon the plight of millions of children worldwide, and the need to create and implement non-violent strategies to alleviate to that plight.

#### *(i) Non-violence Peace Force*

Non-violent Peaceforce is a federation of over 90 Member Organisations from around the world. In partnership with local groups, unarmed Non-violent Peaceforce Field Team members apply proven strategies to protect human rights, deter violence, and help create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work. The mission of the Non-violent Peaceforce is to build a trained, international civilian peaceforce committed to third-party non-violent intervention.

#### *(ii) Pax Christi*

Pax Christi International is a non-profit, non-governmental Catholic peace movement working on a global scale on a wide variety of issues in the fields of human rights, security and disarmament, economic justice and ecology.

#### *(iii) Serpaj*

The organisation Servicio Paz y Justicia (The Peace and Justice Service) is human right organisation that was founded in 1974 by 1980 Peace Nobel Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel. SERPAJ is very interested in the work of the Truth and human rights in South America and in the world.

*(iv) Sipaz*

SIPAZ is a programme of international observation that had its beginning in 1995, following the Zapatista uprising in 1994. It was formed to monitor the conflict in Chiapas, México. Today SIPAZ supports the search for non-violent solutions that contribute to the construction of a just peace through building tolerance and dialogue among the actors in Chiapas as well as, increasingly, in other areas in México (Oaxaca and Guerrero).

*(v) UNESCO*—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was founded on 16 November 1945. For this specialised United Nations agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, Social and Natural Science, Culture and Communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal to build peace in the minds of men.

*(vi) World Council of Churches (WCC)*

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organised expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity.

*(vii) War Resisters International (WRI)*

War Resisters' International exists to promote non-violent action against the causes of war, and to support and connect people around the world who refuse to take part in war or the preparation of war. On this basis, WRI works for a world without war.

**NON-VIOLENT PEACEFORCE (NP)**

Non-violent Peaceforce (NP) is a nonpartisan unarmed peacekeeping force composed of trained civilians from around the world. Non-violent Peaceforce brings together over 60 Member Organisations from five continents and over 100 supporting organisations. Member Organisations work within their constituencies and communities to enlist support and raise awareness about Non-violent Peaceforce activities.

Since the International Convening Event of 2002, these organisations elect the International Governance Council to oversee the mission of Non-violent Peaceforce.

Non-violent Peaceforce is supported by hundreds of individuals and organisations. Nobel Prize Laureates, peace activists, faith-based

communities and many others around the world have endorsed our goals and projects.

Regional offices support our staff. Local Chapters in the USA work locally to support the work of Non-violent Peaceforce and advocate for the practice of non-violence where they live.

## **MISSION**

The mission of Non-violent Peaceforce is to build a large-scale trained, international civilian non-violent peaceforce. Non-violent Peaceforce will be sent to conflict areas to prevent death and destruction and protect human rights, thus creating the space for local groups to struggle non-violently, enter into dialogue, and seek peaceful resolution.

Field Team Members in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Eastern Sri Lanka Non-violent Peaceforce

- Deploys international, trained, civilian field teams to conflict areas upon invitation by local peace groups
- Builds capacity for non-violent intervention through recruitment, assessment, trainings and rapid response mechanisms in crisis areas
- Conducts public awareness campaigns and political advocacy to increase international support and recognition of the effectiveness of civilian non-violent intervention in preventing violence and fostering a global culture of peace

## **Peace in Action**

Accompany civil society activists, particularly human rights defenders and peaceworkers

Provide protective presence to vulnerable groups and communities

Monitor ceasefire agreements and other volatile situations

Connect vulnerable communities and local peaceworkers to national and international resources

Link local leaders, communities and individuals working towards peaceful resolution of conflicts

Provide safe places for conflicting groups to meet and dialogue

By working together with local partners, Non-violent Peaceforce contributes to

- Increased security for local peace advocates and their families

- Greater safety and empowerment of local civil society in dealing with conflict management
- Development of early response to potential violence
- Facilitation of negotiations for the return of displaced people to their homes
- Safe return of abducted child soldiers and family support for parents of missing and abducted children

**SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
NON-VIOLENT CIVILIAN PROTECTION: BUILDING THE  
GLOBAL CAPACITY BY MEL DUNCAN ON 26 SEP. 2007**

Gandhiji told us in I forget which session, "There is a soul force in the universe which if we permit it will flow through us and produce miraculous results."

David Grant, Non-violent Peaceforce's (NP) Strategic Relations Director, once approached Gene Sharp. Many of you know Gene as a leading non-violent strategist and writer who has chronicled the many ways that non-violent actions have brought about social change. David asked Gene, "When are you going to write the book about non-violent peacekeeping?"

"You'll have to write that book," Gene replied.

We are writing that book right now with our experience, our wisdom, our money and, indeed, our lives. We have written eight chapters over the past two days while meeting here at our international conference in Nairobi.

**Chapter 1: What we do matters!**

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate from Northern Ireland, proclaimed at the beginning of the conference, "What you are doing here is helping the very survival of the human family."

Liam Mahoney of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue has spent the last four years studying proactive presence. In looking at how unarmed civilians can change behaviour on the ground he observed, "All parties have multiple sensitivities. Combatants want the world to think the other guy is the bad guy."

Marcel Smits and Jibo Alia of NP's Sri Lanka peacekeeping project gave us examples of how NP teams have saved lives in Trincomalee and Alipidy.

In our small groups we discussed how non-violent peacekeeping is providing protection to civilians in Guatemala and the Mindanao region of the Philippines.

We must not let others dismiss our important work or even worse dismiss it ourselves. As Mairead reminded us, “We are the super power in the world today!”

### **Chapter 2: We have enough resources**

I say this as someone who a month ago did not know where the money would come from to fund this conference while at the same time keeping our operations going. We have everything we need and it is here and now. Look around you. You see a wealth of experience, courage, intelligence and wisdom in this room.

There are huge needs and even bigger expectations. We have discussed some of these in the small groups on Uganda, Burma and the Niger River Delta.

NP can and will respond to some of these needs. But don't wait for NP. Connect with each other. We have member organisations and regional structures. Use them. Build alliances.

Most importantly, we have an audacious idea that says non-violent peacekeeping is effective and infectious. Our work goes far beyond Non-violent Peaceforce as an organisation. We need to experiment with and spread this approach to dealing with violent conflicts.

Our resources are growing. There is a stirring in civil society. Niru Vora of Swarajpeeth called it “a hunger in our hearts and minds.”

### **Chapter 3: Multiple Levels**

We need to integrate our work simultaneously on various levels: internal, local, national and international.

NP International Governing Council Members Young Kim, Ramu Manivannan and Brother Dominic Kariuki of member organisation, Chemchemi ya Ukweli demonstrated at the beginning of each day that peace truly begins within each of us. It is important that we attend to our internal practice however we may define it for ourselves.

On the local level, Niru Vora described the important Shanti Sena work carried out by Swarajpeeth where Hindus and Muslims in Uttar Pradesh have completed rigorous training and taken public vows of non-violence. Now they work together to stop outbreaks of communal violence.

We have heard reports from NP's peacekeeping projects in Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Guatemala. International peacekeepers often working with local civilians provide protection, reduce the number of abusive actions, keep dialogue open and help local people to take action in challenging environments of escalating violence. Liam Mahoney of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue set a broader context finding that the primary impacts of civilian proactive presence include:

- Protection
- Deterrence of violence
- Encouragement and empowerment of local actors
- Influence on institutions.

On the international level Rolf Carriere, a retired UNICEF official and current senior advisor to NP, talked about the need to advocate within the UN for greater acceptance of civilian unarmed peacekeeping as a first or second resort. There are 15 units within the UN that could and should be involved in unarmed peacekeeping. The UN now has a greater receptivity to working with other groups recognising that no organisation can do it alone.

I was struck that when Marcel Smits was asked what the Sri Lanka project needed from the rest of us his first response was international visibility. On all levels we have to maintain a consistent and coherent message.

#### **Chapter 4: Tensions Make us Strong**

I see NP as a ring held up by cables pulling on opposite sides. Our joint work takes place inside the ring. We need each of those cables to stay taut to assure that the ring stays up. If one of those cables goes slack the ring tilts or falls.

Our tensions will keep us strong as long as we deal with them openly while at the same time not losing sight of the important work that has been entrusted to us.

We have the tension between the philosophical approach to non-violence and the strategic approach. Even reference to the word "strategic" brings protests from some of us.

Bishop Baker Ochola of Uganda models the deep forgiveness implicit in non-violence. Mairead exudes the required passion. Rajiv Vora keeps us on track in pursuing the Gandhian approach to active non-violence. At the same time Liam has detailed the tactics and strategies that



have been shown to provide effective civilian protection. Marcel and Aila have further shown how these strategies work in Sri Lanka.

Liam pointed out that we have a tension in NP between building a movement and, at the same time, providing a professional, quality service. Either of these tasks is no small feat. Yet, the tension between them assures that we provide relevant and effective service that is accountable to the grassroots.

Another tension rises between the expertise that we are gaining and the need to remain flexible and creative. The presentations on Proactive Presence, the case study on NP's work in Sri Lanka plus the small groups that discussed Colombia, Mindanao, Northern Uganda, the Middle East, Guatemala, the African Great Lakes region and Burma demonstrate that we are learning to do this work effectively. We have a growing expertise. Yet, as Liam warned, we lose creativity the more we become experts. We need to remain creative and experimental as we learn how to do our work. A key to this is remaining open to critiques of our work and assuring that we build in active ways to capture lessons learned. NP requires these tensions.

### **Chapter 5: Address Structural Issues**

Violence is more than the outbreak of war. It starts well before the first shots are fired. Violence is built into the very structure of our societies. More people are killed by the structural economic and political systems bolstered by neo-colonialism and racism than by overt war.

George Washira challenged us to address these structural causes and promote justice.

Marcel described in Sri Lanka how it was important for NP not to arrive with set agendas. But, rather, our role is to help open the space and protect and encourage local people to be able to express the root causes.

### **Chapter 6: New Opportunities**

We are part of a broader movement that is redefining the very concept of human security. This new definition takes us beyond the narrow scope of security based upon territory to a concept of security based on human needs, identity and aspirations.

This changing concept of human security opens the space for new actors. Senja Korhonen observed that this change could be as profound as the Reformation. In the past when security was based upon the



acquisition and protection of land the military and police were the actors. With the broadening of the concept, an entire new role for civil society has emerged with peacebuilding and peacekeeping taking center stage.

The supremacy of state sovereignty is also changing. This is reflected in the changes from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the present African Union (AU) described by Brother Elias. The OAU was formed in the 1960's to protect the sovereignty of its member states. Now the AU has a mandate to intervene in the affairs of its member states when there is a grave violation of human rights.

Rolf Carriere cited the growing global norm of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). This concept asserts that the international community has a responsibility to intervene when civilians are being brutalised. Sovereignty does not provide a shield for nations to abuse their citizens. Variations of the norm have been passed by both the UN General Assembly and Security Council.

Through our advocacy, peacebuilding and most importantly to this conference through our non-violent peacekeeping interventions we are defining the role of civil society in R2P.

Rolf points out that just as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has served as the basis for Amnesty International and the Geneva Conventions provides the basis for the International Council of the Red Cross, Responsibility to Protect can serve as the basis for Non-violent Peaceforce.

Liam warns that we have to be careful. These very concepts that we are helping to develop are and will be used to justify brutal actions.

## **Chapter 7: Deepening our Understanding and Ability to do the Work**

Five years ago many of us gathered in Suriykund, India to begin Non-violent Peaceforce. At that time we chose Sri Lanka as the site for our first project. In these past two days at our second international gathering here in Nairobi, we have reviewed and analysed our four years of experience in Sri Lanka. We have seen how our work there has:

- Reduced the number of abusive actions
- Eased the suffering of victims
- Kept dialogue open
- Helped people overcome fear

- Increased the number of local people taking action
- Reduced interference of armed groups in community affairs
- Returned and protected child soldiers
- Saved lives.

We also see that there are sobering ground realities as war intensifies with 5,000 people killed since November of 2005 including at least 40 aid workers.

Yet, even when war is intensifying, Liam has found that at the local level protective presence is making a difference. People feel safer and can be more active in building civil society amid escalating violence.

Let us take a moment to reaffirm our responsibility and gratitude to the wonderful past and present peacekeepers who are with us today:

- Jibo Aila
- Peters
- Shiva Adhikari
- Betsy Crites
- Oloo Otieno
- Jan Passion
- Marcel Smits

### **Chapter 8: Our work is based upon Relationship**

A consistent theme weaving throughout the past two days is that our work is based upon building relationships in the areas we serve. These relationships take time and cannot be rushed. This is true working on the local, national and international levels. Key ingredients include:

- **Acceptance:** Invitation is key here. Peacekeepers have to be accepted by the community if we are to have any basis for action.
- **Credibility:** Civilian interveners have to demonstrate that we know what we are doing, that we are well trained and professional.
- **Trust:** Individuals and communities need to know that we are there for the long haul, willing to do hard work and share in the suffering.
- **Relationship:** War is probably the ultimate rupture of relationship. The work of civil society whom we support and represent through our member organisations is to address the root causes of such

ruptures and re-knit relationships to build the peace. The job of civilian unarmed peacekeepers is to open the space and support the work so such relationships can be built and endure.

## **PAX CHRISTI**

Pax Christi International is a non-profit, non-governmental Catholic peace movement working on a global scale on a wide variety of issues in the fields of human rights, security and disarmament, economic justice and ecology.

### **Basics**

Pax Christi International was started in 1945 as an organisation of Catholics in Europe who wanted to promote reconciliation at the end of the Second World War.

### **History**

Pax Christi International is made up of autonomous national sections, local groups and affiliated organisations spread over 30 countries and 5 continents with over 60 thousand members worldwide. Most of the regular work at the international level is done through commissions, thematic and regional working groups, and consultations.

### **Structure**

Pax Christi International's governing bodies include an International Council and an Executive Committee with an International President, currently held by Patriarch Michel Sabbah. The day-to-day operations are carried out by the Secretariat's office in Brussels.

Pax Christi Vision statement drafted by members on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary celebrated in Assisi (Italy), in 1995.

### **Vision**

Representation and advocacy is integral to Pax Christi International's work. It is recognised and has representation status at the United Nations in New York and Vienna, the UN Human Rights Commission and Sub-commission in Geneva, UNESCO in Paris, UNICEF in New York, and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France.

## **SPIRITUALITY**

Pax Christ International's work is based in spirituality. It is a Catholic organisation but welcomes all religious groups and strives for dialogue and co-operation with non-governmental organisations and movements working in the same field – Christian, Jewish, Muslim and non-religious.

## **Representation and Advocacy**

Representation and advocacy is integral to Pax Christi International's work. It is recognised and has representation status at the United Nations in New York and Vienna, The UN Human Rights Commission and Sub-commission in Geneva, UNESCO in Paris, UNICEF in New York, and the Council of Europe.

### *Local Priorities*

Although the national Pax Christi sections establish common priorities, each section is autonomous in adopting general priorities according to its own situation. It also develops its own programme of action within the spirit of the movement. Each section may also have a Youth Forum co-ordinated by young people with a particular focus on the issues of peace and justice most concerning them.

### *The Work*

The work of Pax Christi International is carried out in commissions, thematic and regional groups, and consultations. The working groups deal with issues important to particular regions or specific themes. Commissions deal with interest areas across regional lines. These commissions and working groups meet on a regular basis.

### *Goals*

Goals are achieved by constantly bringing people together through projects directed at:

Solidarity—visits and fact-finding missions to areas affected by violence in order to report, document and educate the wider world.

Dialogue—offering opportunities for leaders of religious communities, especially in conflict areas, to listen and learn from one another so together they can help their different faith communities to find a way toward reconciliation.

Training—exchanges and experiences where people can confront old prejudices and develop new skills as future peacemakers.

Advocacy—speaking up for human rights, justice and disarmament in the UN and other international institutions where decisions are made. This is also done on the national level through national chapters.

Networking—with those in every country who are working for peaceful alternatives to violence.

### *Grassroots*

Grassroots activities representing the work of the movement take place in many forms all over the world; youth exchange programmes between Serb and Albania youth, peace education in refugee camps in Bosnia, election monitoring in Africa, world wide letter writing campaigns for demilitarisation, peaceful protest against Iraqi sanctions, post card campaigns for solidarity with those in conflict areas, interfaith prayer services for the victims at Hiroshima, and many, many others, give just a small example of the vast scope of Pax Christi International's grassroots work.

## **HISTORY**

### **1939-1945 World War II**

People often ask 'How did Pax Christi begin?'. It's an interesting story which begins in France during the Second World War. To understand the context you have to remember all the terrible things that were happening in Europe at that time...

Pax Christi really grew from two seeds of inspiration. The first was a bishop—Pierre-Marie Théas, Bishop of Montauban in the South of France. During the war he was one of the only bishops to protest about the deportation of Jews from France. In a pastoral letter to be read throughout his diocese he wrote:

"I give voice to the outraged protest of Christian conscience, and I proclaim... that all men, whatever their race or religion, have the right to be respected by individuals and by states..." (1942)

"Love your enemies"

One evening in 1944 Bishop Théas spoke in his cathedral against the deportation of Jews and of young French men who were being sent to forced labour camps. The next day he was arrested and spent several weeks in a prison camp at Compiègne. While he was there the other prisoners asked him to lead them in prayer and reflection. He chose to preach on 'Love your enemies' and suggested that they should pray for their gaolers. This provoked a strong reaction. They found it so hard to accept. When Théas had the chance to say Mass in the camp he offered it for Germany.

Bishop Théas was released a few weeks later and went back to his diocese, but that prison episode affected him deeply and gave him an understanding of how difficult and demanding true reconciliation between enemies would be.

---

The second Pax Christi seed of Inspiration was a teacher, Marthe Dortel-Claudot, who lived in the South of France also, with her husband and children. She was involved in her local parish and she was evidently a very prayerful person.

During the winter of 1944, as Christmas approached, she found herself thinking about the suffering of the German people. She wrote in her Journal: "Jesus died for everyone. Nobody should be excluded from one's prayer." She prayed that Germany would be healed of the spiritual and moral effects of 12 years of Nazism.

Encouraged by her parish priest she formed a small group who prayed with her for the re-building of Germany and for peace. Among the first to join her were a war widow, the daughter of a deportee, and some Carmelites.

The next step was to try and find a bishop to give the project official church support. The first person she asked refused. But in March 1945 she went to see Bishop Théas. He was of course exactly the right person to understand her vision. He agreed to help, provided his Archbishop approved. So the next day Madame Dortel-Claudot visited the Archbishop of Toulouse and obtained his support. When she returned to Montauban with this news Bishop Théas accepted the leadership of the new 'Crusade of Prayer' for Germany. The project was given the name 'Pax Christi'.

### **1945 End of the War, Beginning of Rebuilding**

The vision of reconciliation, which these two people -Madame Dortel-Claudot and Bishops Théas—had experienced, was a strong inspiration in the early days of Pax Christi and it remains a key aspect of our spirituality today.

At the end of the war people in Europe were desperately longing for peace and they responded warmly to popular peace initiatives. One of the first was this peace pilgrimage to Vezelay in France. It was a powerful symbol of the rebuilding of Europe.

Pax Christi grew quickly and before long bishops in both Germany and France gave their support. There were pilgrimages to Lourdes and actions to promote Franco-German reconciliation. Bishop Théas was now Bishop of Lourdes and he visited Germany several times to express a new relationship.

He gave German children their First Holy Communion and obtained freedom for their fathers who were still prisoners of war. A German



section of Pax Christi was started. In another gesture of reconciliation a few years later the German section of Pax Christi gave a chalice to the parish of Oradour-sur-Glane as a symbol of reparation for the massacre committed by German SS soldiers in 1944 which had wiped out the village.

Those were the beginnings of Pax Christi. Quite quickly Pax Christi moved on from being a Crusade of Prayer for Germany to being a Crusade of Prayer for all nations.

An important characteristic was that it was a movement of lay people in the Church. It is very interesting to see how Pax Christi's own understanding of its role immediately began to expand and develop as it responded to the new challenges of each decade. And even now we are being led along new paths towards a more complete picture of what peace means.

### **1950 Pax Christi Grows.**

In the 1950s Pax Christi spread to other European countries and the headquarters moved to Paris. The movement organised international centres and pen-friend schemes to promote contact and international understanding especially between young people.

In 1952 they took part in a Pax Christi "Route" from Assisi to Rome. This became a very popular annual walking pilgrimage-holiday for young people. We are still running "routes" today. In Rome Pope Pius XII gave official recognition to Pax Christi's mission as the Catholic peace movement.

Pax Christi was beginning to realise that its spirituality would lead it towards social and political action. The themes chosen for Pax Christi meetings, congresses and Peace Days in the churches show that among its concerns Pax Christi now included the poverty and under-development of the countries struggling against colonisation - and East-West relations during the Cold War. Catholics were also beginning to be interested in Gandhi's ideas about non-violence..

### **1960 Peace on Earth**

In the 1960s the role of Catholics as peacemakers was given strong support from the Vatican. Pope John XXIII addressed many of the world's urgent problems in his famous encyclical letter called *Pacem in Terris*—Peace on Earth. It could have been a manifesto for Pax Christi. In these years there was increased public concern about the possibility of a nuclear war. The Vietnam war began, and for the first



time, many US young Catholics were among those refusing military Service. At the Second Vatican Council the bishops of the world supported the right to conscientious objection and condemned nuclear deterrence. The next Pope, Paul VI, made a critical link between world poverty and the money and resources wasted on armaments. He repeated a Pax Christi phrase when he said “Development is the new name for Peace”. He also created the World Day of Prayer for Peace which is still held on 1st January every year. Pax Christi members used every opportunity to bring the Church’s peace teachings to Catholics at the local level through peace education in schools and parishes.

In 1965 Pax Christi began its “Dutch period” when the headquarters moved from France to the Netherlands under the Presidency of Cardinal Alfrink. The International Secretary at this time was a Dutchman called Mr ter Maat. It wasn’t until the 1970s that we got our first sections outside Europe—in the United States and Australia. It is impossible in a brief outline like this to mention all the issues and projects taken up by Pax Christi. You have to remember that each national section takes up the issues which are of particular concern in their situation. To give just one example, it is the British and Irish sections which have been most active over Northern Ireland. For twenty years they have been running play schemes to bring children from the different communities together. Other sections have been involved with Poland, Angola, East Timor, the Middle East—and many other areas of conflict.

### **1970—New York, Brussels, Geneva**

The 1970s the arms trade became the focus of new campaigns in several countries. Internationally Pax Christi was involved in some important initiatives. Dom Helder Camara of Brazil asked Pax Christi to sponsor several influential consultations on non-violence.

Pax Christi had been given consultative status at the United Nations and started to make regular submissions—especially to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

Contacts were developing with Christians in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These led to an important series of seminars and exchanges with the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1978 the International Office moved to Belgium with Etienne de Jonghe as International Secretary and Bishop Bettazzi of Italy as President. One of Etienne’s priorities has been to spread Pax Christi to new countries so that it became truly international.

**1980 Truly International.**

All the time through the 1980s our General Assembly meetings were getting bigger as the number of sections increased... Portugal, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Denmark were among the new sections to be formed. It was an extremely busy period for the peace movement. Archbishop Romero of El Salvador asked Pax Christi to show solidarity with the problems of Latin America. Several missions were sent to Central America, Haiti and Brazil, and Pax Christi published reports about the human rights situation in those places.

In 1983 Pax Christi received the UNESCO Peace Education Prize, and in 1987 the UN Peace Messenger Award.

The decade was dominated by increasing tension between the superpowers. Pax Christi members were prominent in disarmament activities around the world. Pax Christi developed its structure of commissions to discuss policy on the interlocking issues of disarmament, human rights and East-West relations.

**From 1990 to the Present—new challenges**

We still are faced by new versions of old problems... poverty... ethnic conflict... racism... refugees... as well as worsening threats of terrorism, raising tensions in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The end of the Cold war, for which we worked, has awakened us more acutely to a broader spectrum of problems across the world. The high objectives of the United Nations Charter, to which more and more nation-states have become signatories have not rectified the malfunctioning of the world community. Violence, misery, oppression, militarism, and acts of terrorism are all too prevalent.

The international spectrum changed drastically during the 1990s and we are only now coming to terms with the new situation. Non-state actors, positive and negative increasingly play a role on the international stage. Inter-state organisations like the United Nations struggle to keep and adapt to the new challenges of non-state-bound terrorism groups and rogue states, as well as the limits to its control. And wars continue to be waged, poverty abounds.

Increasingly, Pax Christi International is being called upon by groups in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East who seek to affiliate with our International Peace movement. These groups on the ground in many cases have witnessed first hand the devastation of conflict and poverty. They look to Pax Christi International to gain exposure

to the international stage and to have greater strength through collaboration with others working for similar aims. In this way, we are able to maintain the twofold quality of our movement, to remain dedicated to local grassroots efforts to work for alternatives to violence and the creation of a culture of peace, while simultaneously connecting these precious local initiatives to something bigger, to make sure these voices are heard in the world.

This is our role at the International Secretariat, to connect the dots, bring people together, and share information, within our movement and to the world at large.

Increasingly we are holding regional meetings to bring together our partners within the region. And every three years we bring representatives of the entire movement together to discern the direction of the movement, to share experiences and deepen our understanding and our co-operation.

## **STRUCTURE**

Pax Christi International is made up of autonomous national sections, local groups, affiliated organisations and corresponding members. Most of the regular international work is done through commissions, thematic and regional working groups, and consultations.

Although the national Pax Christi sections establish common priorities, each section is autonomous in adopting general priorities according to its own situation. It also develops its own programme of action within the spirit of the movement. Each section may also have a Youth Forum co-ordinated by young people with a particular focus on the issues of peace and justice most concerning them. In countries where there is no national section, local Pax Christi groups can become a member of the international movement.

In areas without sections, civil society groups or organisations can apply to the International Secretariat to become an Affiliated Organisation or partner with Pax Christi International. Affiliated organisations are contributing members with voting rights. Partners are non-contributing members, which have no voting rights. These Member Organisations are very diverse: peace and non-violence groups, human rights organisations, research institutes, as well as international religious congregations.

At the occasion of the tri-annual World Assemblies, working groups deal with issues important to particular regions. Commissions deal with interest areas across regional lines. In between the World

Assemblies, the work of Pax Christi is shaped by the international Executive Committee, which meets twice a year, taking into account the recommendations made by the regional and continental consultations.

All those involved in shaping and implementing the international work remain in contact through the electronic newsletter (English, French and Spanish) as well as by using a whole setup of e-mail groups and other digital communication methods.

## **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

The Pax Christi Global Peace Network is made up of a number of organisations that broadly share the common goal of Peace in the world. While each organisation concentrates on its own specific concern, all the Member Organisations are dedicated to one or more of the Pax Christi International concerns. Organisations are classified based on their membership status.

Each National Pax Christi section is autonomous in adopting specific priorities according to its own situation. Each section can put its own emphasis in its programmes of action, while remaining within the spirit of the movement. In countries where there is no national section, local Pax Christi groups can become a member of the international movement. Together, the national sections and local groups form the global movement.

Civil society groups or organisations that work in the spirit of Pax Christi can also apply to the International Secretariat for the status of Affiliated Organisation or Partner with Pax Christi International. These organisations can be peace and non-violence groups, human rights organisations, research institutes and international religious congregations. Affiliated Organisations pay a membership fee and have limited voting rights. Partners pay no membership fee and consequently, have no voting rights.

Strategic Alliances can be developed with organisations that share one or more specific concerns and/or strategies with Pax Christi International.

### **CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS**

Member Organisations meet on a regular basis in Continental and Regional Consultations in order to discuss the challenges for their continent or region. This allows the international movement to develop

concrete action plans based on the needs of the Member Organisations in each particular region.

### **TRIENNIAL WORLD ASSEMBLY (TWA)**

The Pax Christi International Triennial World Assembly determines common priorities and objectives of the movement, works out common action programmes for all Member Organisations, selects themes for study and action, and approves recommendations, resolutions and declarations. Delegates from the National Sections, Affiliated Organisations, Strategic Alliances and Executive Committee make up the Assembly. A representative selection of the local Pax Christi groups and Partner Organisations can also be invited to attend. The TWA meets every three years in different locations all over the world.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

The National Pax Christi sections together form the Annual General Meeting, which deals with statutory and juridical matters, elections, finances and membership. The AGM is held once every year.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM)**

The Executive Committee of Pax Christi International functions in a manner similar to a Board of Directors. The ExCom meets twice a year and is the decision-making body during the AGM and TWA

### **CO-PRESIDENCY**

The International Co-Presidency presides over the Triennial World Assembly and the Executive Committee, and is available to represent the movement on an international level.

### **INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

The International Secretariat runs the day-to-day work of the movement. The Secretary General ensures the carrying-out of decisions taken at the Triennial World Assembly, the Annual General Meeting and the Executive Committee meetings. The Secretary General, along with the staff of the International Secretariat provides for the overall co-ordination of the movement and network. The International Secretariat office is in Brussels.

### **VISION**

Pax Christi Vision statement drafted by members on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary celebrated in Assisi (Italy), in 1995.



## **Vision for Peace**

### *Preface*

Pax Christi was founded in the ashes of World War II as a Catholic voice for peace and reconciliation. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of that founding we wish to look ahead to the tasks that lie before us as a faith based movement rooted in the realities of current experiences. As national sections of Pax Christi we have shared our understanding of the critical issues facing Christian peacemakers, and our vision of the spiritual, practical and political paths our work should take. Our statement combines the contrasting and complementary elements which come from the varied perceptions and experiences of our members.

### **Signs of the times: Challenges**

The end of the Cold War, for which we worked, has awakened us more acutely to a broader spectrum of problems across the world. The high objectives of the United Nations Charter, to which more and more nation-states have become signatories, have not rectified the malfunctioning of the world community. Throughout the regions of Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia, Europe and the Pacific there is violence of all kinds, misery, oppression, militarism and acts of terrorism. Indeed, since the end of the Cold War we have been confronted with new kinds of war in the world, causing an ever increasing number of civilian victims. Security may be less threatened externally from guns and bombs; security is, however, threatened internally by injustice, cultural and social disintegration, and by the weakness or decomposition of political authority. Our world needs to move forward from a security assured mainly by weapons to a security guaranteed primarily by sustainable human development.

There is contempt on a universal scale for individual and group rights including self-determination for numerically small peoples, and for ethnic and cultural minorities within national states.

The gaps between rich and poor, between North and South, and between humans and nature, grows wider and ever more scandalous. These gaps are the source of future conflicts. The concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few institutional and private decision-makers imposes manifestly unjust structures on the world community. The burden and injustice of international debt for developing countries, and the consequent increasing unemployment, impels us to reject our present global economic and monetary structures.



The worldwide arms trade is used as a means of economic growth or political gain, despite the fact that it encourages and fuels militarism and crime everywhere. The nuclear threat continues. Wars, internal disputes, environmental pollution and economic decline create a large number of refugees. Attempts are made to stop refugees from entering the rich countries.

In spite of a growing awareness of the realities of environmental degradation and the imperatives of conservation, excessive consumption of the earth's resources is still the basis of the world's economic systems, and pollution is virtually out of control.

In some parts of the world there is an alarming increase in personal violence and sometimes a total disregard for the dignity and sanctity of human life. Family life is increasingly fragile, especially due to domestic violence. The mass media bombards us with images of greed, anger and violence. Political opponents are quickly demonised, ethnic hatred is encourage and wars are sacralized. No system seems able to diminish racism, sexism, xenophobia, fundamentalism or aggressive nationalism. Even the Christian churches do not always speak and act clear enough against structures of social sin.

### **Signs of the times: Hope**

Pax Christi International is deeply conscious of these enormous challenges, but is still encouraged by many signs of hope in this time of change.

Significant political change has taken place in Europe in 1989 without massive violence. The movement towards enduring regional peace, albeit still delicate, in South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland bolster our hope for effective peacemaking.

The activities of non-government and people's organisations all over the world encourages us. There is a growing interest in the development of conflict resolution techniques, and in exploring non-violent alternatives, thus continuing the Christian tradition of non-violence. On every continent more and more women are emerging as agents of change and as new leaders in the struggle for greater equality and peace. There is no lack of goodwill among a large proportion of the population if only ways can be found of harnessing their desire for justice and peace to realistic programmes of social justice.

A growing sense of dialogue between the world primal or traditional cultures and religions also gives new hope. Many discover in their

rejuvenated cultures, alternatives to a valueless consumerism. In the military field, chemical and biological weapons have been outlawed by international convention, and there has been some initial reduction in the stocks of nuclear devices. We continue to join forces worldwide to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction on a global scale and support all efforts to eliminate the whole arms trade and overcome negative environmental trends. Grassroots projects of fair trade and ethical investment are embryos of a more just economic order.

### **Vision**

As a movement of reconciliation based on Christ's gospel of peace, Pax Christi International will continue its prophetic role within the Church and the world. We will dedicate ourselves to the promotion of active Christian non-violence by living and proclaiming non-violence, and will promote non-violent transformation towards the world. We will uphold the belief that waging war, aggression and destruction can never be acceptable. Pax Christi International seeks to be a leaven within the Catholic Church and to help to transform it into a church which gives unambiguous witness to the non-violent Jesus.

In this way we hope to contribute to the development of the Church's social and moral teaching. Within the Church and society we will continue our efforts to foster a culture of non-violence, to nurture programmes of peace education and training, mediation, reconciliation and non-violent action. Our aspiration is to realise the vision of Isaiah, when swords may be turned into ploughshares and to implement the words of Paul VI to the United Nations "War never again!" and of Pope John Paul II "War whether nuclear or otherwise may never be used as a means as resolving differences."

### **Towards the Vision**

Pax Christi International will develop a greater variety of practical strategies rooted in a vision of a world which revolves on principles of peace with justice.

We proclaim that peace in its fullest sense cannot be achieved unless we treat the whole of God's creation in a respectful and just manner and recognise our responsibility toward future generations. Spirituality, prayer, study, research and practical action will shape our work; solidarity and compassion will guide our daily efforts. We will encourage serious enquiry, debate and fact finding missions on the sources of injustices, violence and oppression. In the spirit of Jesus we will actively work to eradicate injustices and foster reconciliation

among all those who consider one another as enemies. We will accept the challenge of reaching out to young people and of truly valuing their contribution to our work.

The peace we seek is a peace that flows from justice and a commitment to non-violence. It stems from a recognition of the innate dignity of all creation and of every human person and the autonomous rights of peoples. We shall continue to exercise our influence as a non-governmental organisation, accredited to the United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. We shall intensify the struggle to achieve universal human rights, including the right to life, health, housing, education, dignified work and basic material needs, giving special attention to the rights of minorities, refugees and migrant people, in the spirit of the beatitudes. We will also join in the struggle with greater respect for humanitarian law in war situations, as set out in the Geneva conventions and protocols. We will work to free our world from the dominance of socioeconomic forces which are profit driven. We will support those who work toward socially just, sustainable and ecologically stable development in all parts of the world.

In our efforts to realise our vision we will continue the ongoing discussion within our movement and the world at large around the scriptural and traditional roots of non-violent resolution of conflicts by means of dialogue, active resistance and reconciliation. Therefore we will strive to ensure a serious scrutiny of the use of limited military force even when the UN Charter appears to allow it.

We will continue to engage in inter-religious dialogue, and intercultural experience as essential ingredients of peacemaking. We recognise the richness of all the great spiritual traditions, and the consequent strength that comes from a vigorous ecumenical dimension. Thus Pax Christi International strongly affirms the need for people of all faiths and goodwill to work together for peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

We Christians are called to continual conversion and the institutional church herself is in constant need of reform. We will try to ensure that respect is maintained when controversies arise, which stem from our different perspectives and from the rich variety of spiritual gifts. As a faith based movement in an increasingly secularised world, we face the challenge of being open to the needs of all and of bringing them the hope that comes from a Saviour who was crucified and is risen. We will endeavour to reflect Christ's love and acceptance of everyone, especially those who for personal, ethnic, sexual, cultural or economic reasons, are often marginalised. This may not make us popular nor

numerous, but it is often through the witness of small groups and minorities that change is facilitated.

As we reflect on our first fifty years we recognise that we now face a vast challenge as we embark on the future. May the Holy Spirit give us the wisdom and courage to accept the challenge of peace with hope, with joy and with openness to God's creative power.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What does Pax Christi mean?**

The name is Latin and means Peace of Christ.

### **What is Pax Christi International?**

It is best described as a Peace Movement. Pax Christ International is just what the name says—"international". It is made up of members in national sections, associated groups and affiliated organisations from all over the world.

### **Who are the members?**

There are all types of lay and religious people from all backgrounds and all cultures. There are over 60,000 members spread over 30 countries and 5 continents.

### **What do they do?**

They are involved in a wide variety of work related to peace—from local grassroots activities and national education campaigns to international advocacy and lobbying. Each national section, associated group and affiliated organisation is involved in projects that are important to them.

### **So is Pax Christi International different than Pax Christi Australia or Pax Christi France?**

Yes. Countries have their own sections—such as Pax Christi Germany or Pax Christi Italy. Each section is autonomous. Pax Christi International sets priorities within the international peace movement and helps to co-ordinate the work of the various members all over the world. It also represents the movement on an international level.

### **How does it represent the movement?**

Pax Christi International is a non-governmental organisation with consultative status at several intergovernmental organisations including the United Nations (UN), UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Council of Europe.

It works to promote the peace agenda through these organisations with advocacy, interventions, lobbying and awareness raising.

**What areas of peace does it work in?**

The work is focused in the fields of demilitarisation and security, justice, human rights, ecology, development, non-violence, economic justice and reconciliation.

**How is the work done?**

It is broken into four basic categories for work: the commissions, the ad hoc thematic groups, the regional working groups and the regional consultations. They work under specific topics or areas of priority. Some examples are Human Rights, Peace Education, and Asia-Pacific.

**What do they do?**

It depends on the topic, the priority and the members involved in that area. Some are involved in advocacy work. One example might be written or oral interventions at the UN Commission on Human Rights on the issue of child soldiers. Some are involved in direct action like work in refugee camps. Others do research and education.

**What are some concrete examples?**

There are a lot to choose from. In September 2000 two young people from Northern Ireland went to Kosovo where they met with and helped to co-ordinate a meeting with Serb and Albanian teenagers. Pax Christi USA recently finished a bus tour that travelled to dozens of US cities informing people about the amount of money spent on the military. Pax Christi Flanders held a peace week with a number of educational activities including a post card campaign to support peace groups working in conflict zones. In October 2000, 20 African countries came together in South Africa and drafted a joint statement for priorities for peace at the first ever Africa Consultation. Work just like this goes on all over the world.

**How does spirituality fit in?**

Pax Christ International work is based in spirituality. It is a Catholic organisation but welcomes all religious groups, as well as those not affiliated with a religious group.

**How did it start?**

Pax Christi began in France and Germany at the end of World War II by Catholic men and women working for reconciliation. It

quickly spread throughout Europe and eventually the rest of the world. In 1995 Pax Christ International celebrated 50 years of work.

### **Who's in charge?**

Pax Christi International works a lot like a government. It is made up of an International Council, an Executive Committee with an International President, and an International Secretariat.

### **What What is the International Council?**

The International Council is the highest governing body of the movement. Delegates from the national sections, the associated groups, and affiliated organisations make up the council. They meet every two years in different locations all over the world.

### **What is the Executive Committee?**

The Executive Committee is the body responsible for the international work of the movement. They have an International president and they approve recommendations from the three commissions, and regional and thematic working groups.

### **Who is the International President?**

Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Palestine was elected president in 1999.

### **Who is the International Secretary?**

Etienne De Jonghe of Belgium is the International Secretary. His office is in Brussels and is responsible for the day-to-day operations and co-ordination of the movement.

### **Where does the money come from?**

Funding comes from contributions from the national sections and other sources like grants, sales of publications and newsletter subscriptions.

### **How can I participate?**

The movement works through volunteers just like you. Contact the section, group or association in your area to find out what you can do.

## **INTERNATIONAL PEACE PRIZE**

Pax Christi International honours the women and men who stand up for peace, justice and non-violence in different parts of the world. In publications and posters, Pax Christi member organisations often tell the stories of well-known peace heroes such as Mahatma Gandhi,



---

Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day and the martyrs of El Salvador. But we do not just look to the past for our heroes. Pax Christi International makes an annual peace award to a contemporary figure who is working against violence and injustice, usually at the grassroots level.

Peace Price Laureates [1988-2005]:

2005—Jacques Delors (France) French statesman and former European Commission President for his vision and contribution to peace and security on the continent in addition to his efforts in strengthening Europe's role in peace building around the world.

2004—Sergio Vieira de Mello (Brazil), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights And UN Special Representative in Iraq, for being a champion of peace and human dignity worldwide and for giving his life to his work.

2003—Franjo Starcevic (Croatia) for founding the Peace School in Mrkopalj.

2002—Father Roberto Layson (Philippines) for building a culture of peace among Christians, Muslims and indigenous people in an area of armed conflict.

2001—Eddie Kneebone (Australia) for promoting reconciliation between young Australians.

2000—Ann Pettifor (United Kingdom) and Laura Vargas (Peru) for their work on the Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel the debts of developing countries.

1999—Clonard Fitzroy Fellowship (Northern Ireland) for their Catholic-Presbyterian initiative to unite people in a divided community.

1998—Laurien Ntezimana and Father Modeste Mungwarareba (Rwanda) for training young leaders to be agents of reconciliation between ethnic groups.

1997—Father Domingos Soares and Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz (East Timor) for their work on education, development and dignity of people in poor communities in East Timor.

1996— Franjo Komarica, bishop of Banja Luka, Hadzi Halilovic, mufti of Banja Luka, Jelena Santic and Gordana Stojanovic (Yugoslavia) for promoting reconciliation amidst the hostilities.

1995—Janina Ochojska (Poland), founder of Poland Humanitarian Action, for organising humanitarian relief convoys to Chechnya and the former Yugoslavia.

1994—Father José Mpundu E'Bootó (Zaire), co-founder of the Groupe Amos, for fighting against corruption and promoting justice, peace and democracy.

1993—Ray Williams and Dorraine Booth-Williams (USA), members of the Swinomish American Indian nation, for promoting the cultures and traditions of indigenous peoples in Central, North and South America.

1992—Joaquim Pinto de Andrade (Angola), founding member of the Popular Movement for the Liberation in Angola, for his advocacy for freedom and civil rights and for his contribution to the post-war reconstruction of his country.

1991—Osservatorio Meridionale (Italy), a research centre, for challenging the power of the Mafia and promoting development in poor areas in southern Italy.

1990—Dana Nemcova (Czechoslovakia) for championing human rights and democratic values whilst enduring periods of detention and separation from her family.

1989—Father Luis Pérez Aguirre (Uruguay) for enduring repeated torture and imprisonment by the military dictatorship due to his non-violent activities for justice and human rights.

1988—Margarida Maria Alves (Brazil), president of the Farmworkers Union, for giving her life in the struggle for the rights of poor rural workers. She was assassinated in 1983.

Pax Christi National Sections; Associated Groups; and Affiliated Organisations

## **100 POEMS OF THE IRAQI WARS**

- Abolition 2000
- Acronym Institute
- Alternatives to Violence(AVP)
- Amnesty International
- Anti war
- Arab and Muslin World Info
- Association Catholique Internationale de Services pour la Jeunesse Féminine
- Balkans Peace Team
- Biblical References

- BOCS foundation
- Bradford University
- Brookings Institute
- Campaign Against the Arms Trade
- Carnegie Commission
- Center for Global Education
- Centre for European Policy Studies
- Center of Concern
- Center on Conscience and War (CCW)
- Children's Rights across the World
- Christian Peacemaker Teams
- CIIR
- Civilian Peace Service
- Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers
- Conciliation Resources
- Conflict Research Consortium
- Conflict resolution center international
- Conflict and Religion
- Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED)
- CORPED COPRED
- Council for a Liveable World Council for a Liveable World
- Council of European Bishops' Conferences
- CRIN
- The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance of the World Council of Churches
- Equal Exchange and Fair Trade
- European Coalition on Oil (ECOS)
- European Human Rights Centre
- European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation
- European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU)
- Faces of Christianity
- Faces of Israel
- Food Not Bombs

- 
- FOR/USA
  - Fourth Freedom Forum
  - Free Cuba Foundation
  - Friends for a Non Violent World
  - Gandhi Information Center
  - GRIP
  - Human Rights Watch
  - IANSA
  - ICMICA/MIIC Pax Romana
  - INCORE
  - Industrial workers of the world
  - Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
  - Institute for Peace and Justice
  - International Alert
  - International Association for Religious Freedom
  - International Campaign Ban Landmines
  - International Criminal Court (CICC)
  - International Criminal Law Network
  - International Labour organisation
  - International Peace Bureau
  - International Peace Force
  - Jesuit Refugees Service
  - Join Together against gun violence
  - Judeo Christian
  - Life and Peace Institute
  - Mary Knoll Mission Association
  - Mennonite Central Committee
  - Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee
  - MK Gandhi Institute
  - M.M.T.C.
  - Museums for Peace
  - National Coalition for Haitian Rights
  - New Humanist Movement
  - NGO Committee on Disarmament

- Non-violent Jesus Blogspot
- Non Violent Peace Force
- Non-violence Help
- Non-violence Web
- Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
- OSCE
- Oxfam
- Peace action
- Peace Brigades International
- Peace Magazine
- Peace Museums
- Peace Now
- Peaceful Societies
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Play for Peace
- Project InfoMed USA/Cuba
- Project Ploughshares
- Proposition One committee
- Protest.Net
- Quakers QUNO
- Red Cross
- Resource Center for Non Violence
- Restorative Justice Ministries
- School of the Americas Watch
- Search for common Ground
- Season for Non-violence
- SEDOS
- Share the Wealth
- Share the world's resources
- SIPAZ: International Service for Peace
- SIPRI—Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
- Social Development Review
- Social Scientists' Association (SSA) Sri Lanka
- Sojourners

- TFF The Transnational Foundation
- The International Criminal Court Monitor
- The Lion and Lamb Project
- The Peace Site
- Uganda Conflict Action Network
- UNESCO Liaison Office Small Arms
- US Institute of Peace
- Vatican
- Viva Rio, Brazil
- WACC
- World Conference on Religion and Peace
- World Council of Churches, Overcome Violence
- World Court Project The World Court Project
- Z Net

### **TRIENNIAL WORLD ASSEMBLY**

#### **Pax Christi International Press Release**

Acting together for Peace” was the theme and appeal of the Triennial World Assembly of Pax Christi International that took place from 30 October–4 November 2007 in Torhout/Bruges, Belgium. About 100 delegates from different member organisations worldwide and more than 50 different countries, attended the TWA.

Participants reflected on the vision and mission of Pax Christi International, on the global concerns and discussed and agreed on a strategic framework for 2008-2010.

#### **New Secretary General**

The Secretary General of Pax Christi International, Etienne De Jonghe will be retiring after 29 years of dedicated service. Formal thanks and farewell messages, as well as an official recognition from Church authorities, were presented during the TWA. We are delighted that Claudette Werleigh from Haiti is becoming the new Secretary General. She officially accepted her new responsibilities on 3 November 2007.

Pax Christi International has grown considerably under Etienne’s leadership—from the relatively small number of national sections in existence when he assumed office to the worldwide network of member



organisations which now define the movement. Etienne has been the dynamic force behind this transformation, assisted of course by a dedicated team of staff and international volunteers in Brussels, and especially by his wife, Magda Van Damme—all of whom have played a key part in enabling such positive development to occur.

On Sunday 4 November, a special Eucharistic celebration took place in St. Salvators Cathedral presided by the Bishop of Bruges, Msgr. Roger Vangheluwe, in concelebration with all the bishops present. In the afternoon, a Round Table “Pax Christi: The Journey Continues!” was held at the Provincial Hof and a goodbye party for Etienne in the evening.

### **New Presidency**

At this Assembly Pax Christi International welcomed Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo and Marie Dennis as the new Presidents of the movement. Their 3-year mandate as co-presidents begins with this TWA. H.B. Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has been International President since June 1999.

### **New Members Executive Committee**

A special word of welcome was given to the new members of the Executive Committee (Martha Iñes Romero, Colombia; Hans Kruijssen, the Netherlands; Kevin McBride, Aotearoa/New Zealand; Bishop Marc Stenger, France; Maria Luisa Da Silva Gregório Francisco, Portugal; Hana Nassif, Lebanon; and Katarina Kruhonja, Croatia). A word of thanks was addressed to the outgoing members of the ExCom in particular the outgoing President, H.B. Michel Sabbah.

### **New Vice Presidents**

Loreta Castro from the Philippines, Laura Vargas from Peru and Bishop Kevin Dowling from South Africa were elected by the AGM as the new Vice Presidents of Pax Christi International.

### **Outcome of TWA**

Participants discussed the Strategic Framework of Pax Christi International and identified major concerns and strategies which offer a guide to action on both the international as well as on the regional (continental) level.

### **Resolutions coming from TWA**

Resolutions were adopted on the urgent matters of Iraq and Burma. Other issues reflected on Rwanda; Conscientious Objection; Peace and the Environment; Economic Violence; Endorsement of the UN

Declaration on Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, and An appeal to the UN to include in the agenda of the 2008 General Assembly the discussion of Puerto Rico's colonial situation.

### **New Member Organisations**

On 29 October 2007, the ExCom accepted three new member organisations: Family Mediation and Conciliation (FAMEC) in Kenya; Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour la Paix (CERAP) in Ivory Coast; and the Lebanese Association for Civil Rights. This brings the total member organisations of Pax Christi International to 104.

### **Visit to Ypres and War Cemeteries**

On Friday 2 November, All Souls, participants visited the peace museum Flanders Fields in Ypres and held meditation/prayers for peace at different war cemeteries of World War I.

### **INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR PEACE(SIPAZ)**

SIPAZ is a programme of international observation that had its beginning in 1995, following the Zapatista uprising in 1994. It was formed to monitor the conflict in Chiapas, México. Today SIPAZ supports the search for non-violent solutions that contribute to the construction of a just peace through building tolerance and dialogue among the actors in Chiapas as well as, increasingly, in other areas in México (Oaxaca and Guerrero). At the same time, SIPAZ serves as a bridge for communication and the sharing of information and experiences among organisations and networks that work toward the building of a just and lasting peace at a local, national, regional and international level.

#### **WHAT IS SIPAZ?**

#### **SIPAZ**

- Maintains an international presence and accompanies processes that are working towards the construction of a culture of peace in Mexico.
- Provides trustworthy communication that integrates the voices of local actors and mobilises the local, national and international community in the search for alternative solutions to the causes of violence in Mexico.
- Joins together with organisations, movements and networks in order to share and strengthen the processes that are leading towards building a just peace.

- Maintains contact and dialogue with the many different actors that are present in the conflict

## LOCATION

Chiapas is the southernmost state of Mexico, adjacent to the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz to the west and Tabasco to the north and northeast. To the southeast and east lies the border with Guatemala. Chiapas has an area of 75,634.4 km squared, which represents 3.8 % of Mexico's total area.

## SOURCE REGIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES:

For historical and geographical reasons, the state of Chiapas is split into two major regions: the southwest part which includes the Central, Fraylesca, Isthmus Coast, Sierra, and Soconusco regions; and the northeast part which includes the Highlands, Northern, Lacandon Jungle, and the Border regions.

Chiapas is constitutionally divided into 118 municipalities. The capital is Tuxtla Gutiérrez. The state of Chiapas ranks first in the country in terms of marginalization by locality. Of the 118 municipalities, 109 suffer a high or very high level of marginalization. 33 of the 44 most highly marginalised municipalities are predominantly indigenous (with an indigenous population of at least 40%).

In December 1994, faced with an impasse in the peace talks, the EZLN created 38 autonomous municipalities superimposed on the official municipalities.

In 1998, the state government redrew the official borders of the municipalities in an attempt to counteract the strength of the MAREZ (Zapatista Rebel Autonomous Municipalities). 8 new "official" municipalities were created: Montecristo de Guerrero, Maravilla Tenejapa, San Andrés Duraznal, Marqués de Comillas, Benemérito de las Américas, Santiago and Aldama. Far from reflecting a decentralization of power, this redistricting has allowed for a greater control of the local powers by the state government.

According to an EZLN communiqué from 2003, there are 28 autonomous municipalities, which are comprised of Zapatista support base communities. The autonomous authorities of the municipalities are known as the "Autonomous Council." The councils of each of the five regions with a Zapatista presence (Highlands, Tzeltal Jungle, Border Jungle, Tzots Choj, and Northern Region) are organised in a rotating manner in what are called the "Councils of Good Government." Their

headquarters are in the “Caracoles”: La Realidad, La Garrucha, Roberto Barrios, Oventic y Morelia.

The so-called “conflict zone,” according to the federal government, includes the regions of the Highlands, Jungle, and Border Jungle. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also consider the Northern Region to be part of the conflict zone.

## **INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH PEACE DECLARATION**

On April 4, 2002, the Humanitarian Resource Institute International Peace Center introduced the initial draft of the International Interfaith Peace Declaration, the full text and revisions of which appear on the following pages. Following this act the international interfaith community, intergovernmental and United Nations leadership has been asked to assist in the development and support of this global initiative.

### **PREAMBLE**

Whereas the pursuit of peace, the respect for life and human dignity is the objective of the international community,

Whereas the escalation of systemic hatred, anger, animosity and the motive for revenge has resulted in widespread destruction in the name of religion, in direct contradiction to the highest aspirations of the common people,

Whereas the war on terrorism has resulted in widespread military intervention in an attempt to counter further deterioration of international stability, increased conflicts and the potential use of weapons of mass destruction that threaten the fabric of civilization itself,

Whereas it is essential that peace efforts move beyond military interventions and diplomatic relations to a new level of intercultural-interfaith dialogue and cooperation to achieve a consensus for peace on the grass roots level within the borders of every nation,

Whereas the golden rule, as a foundation for peace, is endorsed by all the great world religions and is best interpreted as saying: “Treat others only in ways that you’re willing to be treated in the same exact situation,”

Whereas present conflicts call for open dialogue, conflict resolution and negotiations that will provide a lasting solution for sustainable peace,

Now, Therefore,

---

WE, MEMBERS AND LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES,

Proclaim,

THIS INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH PEACE DECLARATION is a common standard for all peoples and nations, to the end that every individual and organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote interfaith cooperation and support of progressive measures, national and international, to secure peace and stability.

*Article 1.*

All human beings are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of solidarity pursuing peace and justice for all living beings.

*Article 2.*

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth by the United Nations without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

*Article 3.*

Leaders and representatives of all major and minor religions and spiritual movements have a responsibility to promote the universal objectives of the Golden Rule Principle as a priority message to provide a substantive foundation for dialogue and support of diplomatic relations for peace.

*Article 4.*

The objective of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation is pursued as a vehicle for revitalization of the economic, environmental, political, social and moral challenges facing our Earth community.

*Article 5.*

Measures are taken to create an atmosphere where present and future generations can co-exist with mutual respect and trust to awaken to our deepest truths, and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

*Article 6.*

Functioning spiritual forums for world peace are initiated and supported at the international, national and local levels.

*Article 7.*

The Humanitarian Resource Institute International Peace Center serves as a host for the development of a Forum for World Peace to support the recommendations of this declaration and to engage the international interfaith community, intergovernmental and United Nations leadership accordingly.

*(a) FORUM FOR WORLD PEACE*

Humanitarian Resource Institute, in accordance with Article 7 of the International Interfaith Peace Declaration has developed a global communication network to facilitate dialogue among leaders and representatives of the major faith groups, interfaith organisations, intergovernmental, NGO's, diplomatic contacts, newspaper, radio and television, corporate and community action organisations in approximately 195 countries.

*(b) GLOBAL YOUTH INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON OPEN DIALOGUE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NEGOTIATIONS THAT WILL PROVIDE A LASTING SOLUTION FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE*

The youth hold the future of international peace and security. As terrorism threatens every society and the world takes action, we all must be reminded of the need to address the conditions that permit the growth of such hatred and depravity. Violence, bigotry and hatred must be confronted even more resolutely as work continues to address the ills of conflict, ignorance, poverty and disease.

In a massive international initiative, youth programmes across the globe are being invited to participate in a campaign to encourage elected officials, grass roots organisations and members of their communities to both review and support the International Interfaith Peace Declaration.

**INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH PEACE DECLARATION**

On April 4, 2002, the Humanitarian Resource Institute Interfaith Peace Center introduced the initial draft of the International Interfaith Peace Declaration, the full text and revisions of which appear on the following pages. Following this act the international interfaith community, intergovernmental and United Nations leadership has been asked to assist in the development and support of this global initiative.

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas the pursuit of peace, the respect for life and human dignity is the objective of the international community,



Whereas the escalation of systemic hatred, anger, animosity and the motive for revenge has resulted in widespread destruction in the name of religion, in direct contradiction to the highest aspirations of the common people,

Whereas the war on terrorism has resulted in widespread military intervention in an attempt to counter further deterioration of international stability, increased conflicts and the potential use of weapons of mass destruction that threaten the fabric of civilization itself,

Whereas it is essential that peace efforts move beyond military interventions and diplomatic relations to a new level of intercultural-interfaith dialogue and cooperation to achieve a consensus for peace on the grass roots level within the borders of every nation,

Whereas the golden rule, as a foundation for peace, is endorsed by all the great world religions and is best interpreted as saying: "Treat others only in ways that you're willing to be treated in the same exact situation,"

Whereas present conflicts call for open dialogue, conflict resolution and negotiations that will provide a lasting solution for sustainable peace,

Now, Therefore,

WE, MEMBERS AND LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES,

Proclaim,

THIS INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH PEACE DECLARATION is a common standard for all peoples and nations, to the end that every individual and organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote interfaith cooperation and support of progressive measures, national and international, to secure peace and stability.

*Article 1.*

All human beings are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of solidarity pursuing peace and justice for all living beings.

*Article 2.*

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth by the United Nations without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

*Article 3.*

Leaders and representatives of all major and minor religions and spiritual movements have a responsibility to promote the universal objectives of the Golden Rule Principle as a priority message to provide a substantive foundation for dialogue and support of diplomatic relations for peace.

*Article 4.*

The objective of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation is pursued as a vehicle for revitalization of the economic, environmental, political, social and moral challenges facing our Earth community.

*Article 5.*

Measures are taken to create an atmosphere where present and future generations can co-exist with mutual respect and trust to awaken to our deepest truths, and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

*Article 6.*

Functioning spiritual forums for world peace are initiated and supported at the international, national and local levels.

*Article 7.*

The Humanitarian Resource Institute International Peace Center serves as a host for the development of an Forum for World Peace to support the recommendations of this declaration and to engage the international interfaith community, intergovernmental and United Nations leadership accordingly.

The objectives of this initiative include: (1) the communication of the full text of the International Interfaith Peace Declaration to the grass roots household/community level, (2) to request signatures of support from elected officials, grass roots organisations and members of their communities for this act that has been introduced to the international interfaith community, intergovernmental and United Nations leadership (3) the presentation of the signature lists to their countries national leadership in conjunction with the September 11 anniversary, and (4) the submission of signatures in electronic format to Humanitarian Resource Institute for inclusion in the online signatories to the International Interfaith Peace Declaration.

**REMEMBER THE PEOPLE**

The Global Youth Initiative for Peace is being coordinated in remembrance of all those lost in the World Trade Center/Pentagon

Terrorist Incident (<http://www.humanitarian.net/interfaith/tradecenter>) and in dedication to Sarah Clark, 65, of Columbia, Maryland, a sixth-grade teacher at Backus Middle School in Washington, DC. She was accompanying a student on an educational trip to the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary near Santa Barbara, California, as part of a programme funded by the National Geographic Society.

The Humanitarian Resource Institute International Peace Center is a collaborative initiative to share information and enhance academic discussion of issues related to Crisis Management/Intervention and the prevention and settlement of conflicts between and within states, with emphasis on policy research and development.

**(c) The Golden Rule Principle: Global Religious Leaders Called to Refocus on this Universal Objective of the Interfaith Community**

*A Call to Action by Stephen M. Apatow, President and Founder of Humanitarian Resource Institute.*

Each day in the developing world, 30,500 children die from preventable diseases such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections or malaria. Malnutrition is associated with over half of those deaths. (UNICEF, World Health Organisation)

In developing countries, one child in 10 dies before his fifth birthday. By comparison, in the United States one child in 165 will die before turning five years old. (UNICEF)

Almost 800 million people—about one-sixth of the population of the world's developing nations—are malnourished. 200 million of them are children. (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations)

In the last 50 years, almost 400 million people worldwide have died from hunger and poor sanitation, according to the report. That's three times the number of people killed in all wars fought in the entire 20th century. (BFWI)

Virtually every country in the world has the potential of growing sufficient food on a sustainable basis. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has set the minimum requirement for caloric intake per person per day at 2350. Worldwide, there are 2720 calories available per person per day. Over 50 countries fall below that requirement; they do not produce enough food to feed their populations, nor are they able to afford to import the necessary commodities to make up the gap. Most of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

The wealthiest fifth of the world's people consume an astonishing 86 percent of all goods and services, while the poorest fifth consumes one-percent.

32 percent of the population in the developing world live below \$1 per day (WDI). 2.6 billion people lack access to basic sanitation (UNICEF).

880 million people lack access to adequate health services.

—*Statistics: Bread for the World Institute for Hunger and Development*

In the United States requests for emergency food jumped 17% in 2000, while need for emergency shelter climbed 15%. The increases in demand for both services were among the highest the survey has recorded in the past decade. 62% of people requesting food were from families, and 32% were employed. About 13% of requests for food were unmet; 23% of requests for shelter were unmet. (2000 US Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness in American Cities Survey)

There are 1.3 million runaway and homeless youth in the United States. 5,000 runaway and homeless youth die each year of assault, disease, and suicide. (*National Runaway Switchboard Statistics*)

## THE GOLDEN RULE PRINCIPLE

The golden rule as endorsed by all the great world religions is best interpreted as saying: "Treat others only in ways that you're willing to be treated in the same exact situation." To apply it, you'd imagine yourself in the exact place of the other person on the receiving end of the action. If you act in a given way toward another, and yet are unwilling to be treated that way in the same circumstances, then you violate the rule.

The golden rule, with roots in a wide range of world cultures, is well suited to be a standard to which different cultures could appeal in resolving conflicts. As the world becomes more and more a single interacting global community, the need for such a common standard is becoming more urgent.—*Gensler, Blackwell Dictionary of Business Ethics.*

In the light of growing global humanitarian needs, Stephen M. Apatow, founder of Humanitarian Resource Institute is making an international appeal for religious leaders to refocus on "The Golden Rule Principle," as the most significant objective and message for their faith communities.

The Golden Rule Principle:

Christianity: "So in everything, do to others, what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets".  
—New Testament: MT 7:12 NIV

Buddhism: Treat not others in ways that yourself would find hurtful.—Udana-Varga 5.18

Baha'i: Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.—Baha'u'llah Gleanings

Confucianism: One word which sums up the basis for all good conduct...loving kindness. Do not do to others what you would not want done to yourself.—Confucious Analects 15:23

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.—Mahabharata 5:1517

Islam: Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.—The Prophet Mohammed, Hadith

Judaism: What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole torah; all the rest is commentary.—Hillel, Talmad, Shabbat 31a

Native Spirituality: We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.—Chief Dan George

Janism: One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.—Mahavira, Sutravitanga

Sikhism: I am no stranger to no one; an no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.—Guru Granth Sahib, pg.1299

Taoism: Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbors loss as your own loss.— T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

Unitarianism: We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent of all existence of which we are a part.—Unitarian principle

Zoroastrianism: Do not unto others what is injurious to yourself.  
— Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29

### **SALTLEY GATE PEACE GROUP**

The Saltley Gate Peace Group, is an inner city interfaith organisation based in Birmingham, England.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Saltley Gate Peace Group (SGPG) was initially formed as a joint Christian/Muslim peace initiative in response to the threat of war in Iraq as a part of the growing peace movement in Britain following 9/11.

The group played an active role supporting the Stop the War Coalition in the city and encouraged local activism through a united faith-based front. It continues to participate in the anti-war establishment along with its other work.

## **COMMUNITY**

The SGPG has since become more community based, working with various authorities to ensure a better quality of public service for residents in the more deprived areas of Birmingham.

The organisation also takes a tough stance on vandalism, racism and crime and encourages inter-religious dialogue. It works closely with Birmingham Citizens and the Birmingham Quaker-Muslim Peace and Social Justice Group.

## **CAMPAIGNS**

Amongst its causes has been working with faith leaders to prevent the promotion of glorification of terrorism amongst younger Muslims in the inner city.

In 2005, the SGPG also called on the West Midlands Police to ban the flying of Pakistani flags in the city during the festival of Eid to prevent racial tensions. This followed a similar ban enforced in London.

In January 2007, the group publicly supported the city's Green Lane Mosque against accusations of extremism, made following an investigation by Channel 4.

## **FOUNDERS**

The Saltley Gate Peace Group was founded by faith leader Reverend Simon Topping and community activist Adam Yosef in 2003.

The organisation is currently based at the Saltley Methodist Church in the West Midlands and is supported by Reverend Chris Shannahan, founder of youth programme Yeast in the City.

## **ADDRESS**

Saltley Gate Peace Group, Saltley Methodist Church, 140 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham B8 1HU.







# 52

## CASE STUDY: CONFERENCE ON NON-VIOLENT CIVILIAN PROTECTION AND ASSOCIATED INSTITUTIONS

---

---

### INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Interfaith Council is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious organisation, a living model of diverse people working together with mutual respect for the good of our community.

We educate our community by hosting interfaith gatherings to promote dialogue and understanding, to dispel misinformation and stereotypes, and to celebrate our rich cultural heritage of scripture, story, poetry, dance, music and drama.

We work for the good of our community through our three programmes:

Camp P.E.A.C.E. works to protect our youth from bullying.

Circle of Caring works to protect women from domestic violence.

Advocacy Action Network works to protect all people from poverty and discrimination.

### ADVOCACY ACTION NETWORK

Promote moral and family values that care for people on the margins; understand real economic challenges for low-income families; champion public policy that allows everyone to live with dignity and self-sufficiency. (more)

### **Camp P.E.A.C.E.**

Our youth have the hope and talent to transform our society into one that values, respects and encourages all persons for their gifts of

“different-ness”. But tomorrow’s leaders need inspiration and encouragement. Camp P.E.A.C.E. equips youth to resolve tensions constructively and prepares them to create a society which appreciates and enjoys its diversity.

### **Circle of Caring**

Domestic violence is the number one public health problem for women in the United States. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, domestic violence is the greatest single cause of injury among U.S. women, accounting for more emergency room visits than traffic accidents, muggings, and rape combined. Given these overwhelming national statistics, we know it is happening in our Faith Communities and it is time for us to openly address domestic violence.

### **Faith and Environment Network**

The Faith and Environment Network encourages faith communities to participate in environmental stewardship through education, outdoor recreation, service, and advocacy opportunities. We are developing a dynamic network of individuals and congregations from Spokane area faith communities to work with and support the local environmental community on regional conservation, human health, and quality of life issues. (more)

Interfaith Council believes that conversation, celebration and action can lead to peace. Throughout the year we host a variety of opportunities for the community to gather and learn about the values that our different faiths and cultures treasure.

Celebrations highlight our rich cultural heritage of scripture, story, poetry, drama, dance, and music.

Fundraisers leverage money for local food banks and worldwide hunger relief.

Workshops and forums explore views on such issues as protecting victims of domestic violence, care for the environment, fair trade, or ending genocide in Darfur.

September 20- International Peace Day Vigil Birthday of the Interfaith Council (founded 2003)

### **HISTORY**

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Day of Peace, to encourage annual observance of one single day of global ceasefire and non-violence. Twenty years later, in

2001, September 21 was fixed as the annual date for people around the world, in every country, to practice acts of peace.

On September 21, 2003, Interfaith Council was purposefully established as a living model of people from diverse faith groups working together for the peace and well-being of their local community and the world. Each year, Interfaith Council celebrates its birthday by joining people around the globe in the International Day of Peace.

## **INVITATION**

We invite you to our 2005 vigil celebration on the evening of September 20. Build peace by honouring the strength and beauty of the religious diversity in our region. Practice peace by talking and listening to other people, the most simple act of true peace-making.

We encourage every house of worship and place of spiritual practice, all religious and spiritually based groups to honour September 21 by holding an "International Day of Peace Vigil" so that the power of meditation, prayer and spiritual practice may promote peace and prevent violent conflict in our world.

## **FAITH AND ENVIRONMENT NETWORK**

### **Mission**

The Faith and Environment Network connects people of faith with environmental advocates and opportunities for appreciating, understanding, and caring for creation.

### **Congregational Partnership**

To foster these opportunities for appreciating, understanding, and caring for creation, the Faith and Environment Network seeks to work on three distinct aspects with our congregational partners: Appreciating: Outdoor Service Understanding: Educational Presentations Caring: Congregational Stewardship.

### **Events**

The Faith and Environment Network is active in helping to plan community events and independent activities. Click for a schedule of what's coming up.

### **Links**

The Faith and Environment Network has connections with several local environmental groups. You can find links to those groups, as well as several regional and national faith-based environmental groups.

---

## THE CASE FOUNDATION: A CASE STUDY

“A glance at the daily headlines demonstrates the urgent need to build bridges between people of different cultures, faith traditions, and worldviews,” write interfaith leaders Dr. Akbar Ahmed and Ambassador Doug Holladay in their assessment of the current state of interfaith dialogue, which is now more relevant than ever.

Ahmed, a Muslim, and Holladay, a Christian, have found that “friendship can serve as the vital bridge to establishing deep and lasting understanding.” Read about how their efforts continue to inspire the work of the Buxton Initiative, a partner of the Case Foundation.

As with so many other great challenges today, young people may provide the example for the rest of us to tear down barriers and learn from one another. The heads of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) and Youth Service America (YSA), Dr. Eboo Patel and Steve Culbertson, comment on how “Diverse Youth Find Common Purpose Through Service.”

We were fortunate to catch up with bestselling author Bruce Feiler, and you can read our Q+A with him here. In his books *Walking the Bible*, *Abraham*, and *Where God Was Born*, Feiler examines the nature and history of faith and religion in his own life and in the legacies of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Do you want to learn more? We’ve assembled a list of interfaith resources.

The modern era has ushered in tremendous progress in nearly every facet of human life, from science to medicine to transportation to communications. Advancements in technology and global trade have made the world community more connected than at any other point in human history. Yet for all of our unparalleled recent advancements, there is still progress to be made in learning to live together peacefully and cooperatively. “What we are learning is profound in its simplicity. We are all more alike than different. At the heart of most faith traditions is the desire to seek peace and to love one’s neighbor.” Conflicts between people of religious faiths have been around for millennia. In our globalised and interconnected world, these conflicts have the ability to be more severe and more wide-reaching, able to affect people across the world. Thus, the need to work through our religious conflicts is all the more urgent. A glance at the daily headlines demonstrates the urgent need to build bridges between people of different cultures, faith traditions, and worldviews.

As a committed Muslim and Christian, we have found that friendship can serve as the vital bridge to establishing deep and lasting understanding. Whether on the interpersonal level—between two individuals—or on the geopolitical stage—between two nations—understanding and trust grow in the rich soil of friendship.

The two of us met shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, amid a climate of growing suspicions and brewing hostility. Unfortunately, the airwaves add to the climate of division and mistrust by giving relentless focus to the worst in human nature. Naturally, this feeds cynicism, while the formerly prized values of compassion and understanding are often viewed with contempt and considered “soft” and irrelevant. We reject the notion that the world is doomed to face what the political scientist Samuel Huntington claims is a “clash of civilizations.” Consciously or not, the world is in search of authentic models that engender hope and where genuine faith breeds civility and trust.

After we met, we set out to learn from each other—two people of strong faith who were willing to learn from each other. We decided to meet regularly to better understand each other’s faith traditions and how they have influenced our beliefs and behaviour. We decided not to skirt the tough issues but rather take the time to establish a “bank account” of goodwill and respect. As our trust, understanding, and respect grew, we increased our ability to weather the tough stuff of differences. We expanded our regular conversation to include others similarly inclined—ambassadors, CEOs, policy-makers, senators, military leaders, and journalists. We alternated our dialogue sessions between Muslim and Christian homes, with a rather simple objective—to create a safe table around which all could express their views and where we could learn to live with our differences.

Knowing that millions are killed regularly in the name of religion, one might conclude that we would avoid the “faith factor” at any price. But it is important in any interfaith dialogue for people to remain true to their own beliefs—because putting beliefs aside or ignoring them does not make them go away. Rather, the hard work of speaking openly and honestly pays off when we learn from a person that we have come to trust and who is equally true to his or her own faith.

What we are learning is profound in its simplicity. We are all more alike than different. At the heart of most faith traditions is the desire to seek peace and to love one’s neighbor. Caring and attempting to understand another’s faith journey and perspective are not



---

compromises but rather love in action. Differences need not be threatening; mutual understanding in an increasingly violent world needs to be rediscovered.

Most of the billions of people who are alive today have deeply held religious beliefs. It is only a small fraction of the world's population—the extremists from every faith—who cause there to be such devastating religious conflict. It is up to us, the majority who seek peace and mutual understanding, to counter the extremists in our own faiths, by working to build bridges with people of goodwill from other faith traditions. Taking the time to be friends is an investment, yet it establishes a climate to challenge and ultimately modify one's set views and those of others. It is humbling to enter into another's life and worldview. It is far easier to demonize and make caricatures of those who differ from ourselves. But our progress as a world community depends on this deeper, more difficult endeavor.

In many parts of the world today, people are fighting over differences. We have decided instead to delight in our differences, concluding that on this small planet, a sustainable model of hope and civility might serve as a light in the midst of so much darkness. We hope to encourage others to seek out personal relationships with people who come from faith traditions different from their own. These dialogues must celebrate candor and free expression in the context of trust and openness. And they may be our only hope for global progress and peace.

*Dr. Ahmed holds the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, D.C. Ambassador Holladay is a partner at Park Avenue Equity Partners and a chair of the Buxton Initiative, which facilitates interfaith dialogue.*

The reality of our world is that youth from different traditions, faiths, backgrounds, and perspectives are interacting with one another more frequently than ever before. This interaction tends in one of two directions—conflict or cooperation.

Each April, in sites around the world, this vision becomes a reality through the integration of two of this country's most powerful youth engagement programmes— National and Global Youth Service Day and the National Days of Interfaith Youth Service.

Since 2003, the Chicago-based Interfaith Youth Core has been bringing together youth from different religious backgrounds for its National Days of Interfaith Youth Service, encouraging young people

to articulate and enact the impulse to action in their own faiths, while they discover the same impulse in those of different beliefs.

Since 1988, Youth Service America has coordinated the National and Global Youth Service Day, the largest service event in the world. The millions of young people who participate continue on a lifelong path of service, civic engagement, and philanthropy, while educating adults, the media, and elected officials about the critical role of youth as community leaders, assets, and resources.

IFYC and YSA's partnership represents an intentional shift on the part of the national youth service movement toward actively engaging the growing religious diversity of our country. The reality of our world is that youth from different traditions, faiths, backgrounds, and perspectives are interacting with one another more frequently than ever before. This interaction tends in one of two directions—conflict or cooperation. In classrooms and communities, across the Internet and through the media, youth must learn to interact with those who sometimes seem radically different from them; at the same time, youth are rarely equipped with any means to navigate these complexities of religious diversity. We fear that when youth are not taught to positively understand religious diversity, conflict can appear as the only option. Through this partnership between Interfaith Youth Core and Youth Service America, however, we are showing youth a new way to interact. Our shared commitment to quality service-learning projects brings young people together around the “actionable” values shared between faiths, and we are calling youth to concrete acts of group service around what they share even as they affirm what is unique to their traditions.

Our greatest hope comes in what we know these youth will take away from their work, what we know will happen when these service projects are completed. Reflective and invigorated as they return to their cities, campuses, and faith communities, these young people will return home not just as participants, but as leaders to inspire sustained, ongoing interfaith youth service work. We are partnering to catalyze a movement that encourages young people to serve their world in a way that strengthens their unique religious and moral identities even as it fosters understanding across differences. We believe that creative cooperation can become the standard for how young people of different backgrounds interact. And we believe that it will be young people who ultimately teach this lesson to the world.

There is great power in interfaith youth service work, and great power in our unprecedented partnership. As the leaders of these two organisations, we urge you to find a way to get involved! Please visit our websites and find out how to organise and register your own project or to find a site near you:

## **OVERVIEW**

Our mission is to achieve sustainable solutions to complex social problems by investing in collaboration, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

Jean and Steve Case founded the Case Foundation in 1997 to reflect their family's heartfelt commitment to finding lasting solutions to complex social challenges. Today, the foundation is pursuing a number of initiatives, and is particularly focused on three strategies:

- Encouraging collaboration;
- Supporting successful leaders; and
- Fostering entrepreneurship in the nonprofit sector.

The foundation is applying these strategies to meet the needs of underserved children and families; create thriving and sustainable economic development for communities; bridge cultural and religious divides; expand civic engagement and volunteerism; and accelerate innovative approaches to health care.

The foundation's work stretches across the United States and around the world. To date, we have supported more than 150 organisations that reflect our commitment to collaboration, leadership, and entrepreneurship — and, ultimately, to improving the health and well-being of children, families, and communities.

## **History**

Since Jean and Steve Case established the Case Foundation in 1997, the foundation has worked to address complex social problems by partnering with a number of local, national, and international organisations. In many cases, our hands-on local efforts have informed our work in shaping and supporting larger initiatives.

A specific example of this approach is the foundation's early efforts to bridge the "digital divide" — which began by identifying Computer Learning Centers Partnership (CLCP) in Fairfax County, Va., as a model for after-school technology programmes that could be adopted nationally.

The initiative's positive impact on students led to a major national investment in 1999, when Jean and Steve spearheaded an effort to

bring together high-tech companies, nonprofit organisations, and state and local governments to create PowerUP. With support from America Online, Cisco, Hewlett-Packard, the Waitt Family Foundation, America's Promise, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and other youth-serving organisations, PowerUP created a network of nearly 1,000 community technology centers for underserved youth across the country.

In addition to building and supporting collaborations like PowerUP, the foundation has partnered with groups that maximise their impact through outstanding leadership, like Habitat for Humanity and Special Olympics. The foundation's relationship with Habitat for Humanity began in 1999 in response to the tornadoes that struck Oklahoma City, devastating hundreds of families and their homes. The Cases later expanded their support for the organisation in their home states of Hawaii and Florida. The foundation's support for Special Olympics helped expand programmes around the world and contributed to an increase of more than 250,000 athletes and volunteers.

In addition to its domestic efforts, the Case Foundation has a history of working with international nonprofit organisations to address global challenges. After creating successful public-private partnerships in several countries, the foundation determined that its approach provided great leverage for future international investments on a larger scale.

In Jordan, for example, the Cases were inspired by the bold vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II and his efforts to create universal access to information and communications technology for all Jordanians. The foundation partnered with the King Abdullah II Fund for Development and USAID's AMIR Programme to support a network of 100 community technology centers known as Knowledge Stations. In addition to basic computer literacy, the Knowledge Stations teach community members how to utilise technology to improve their businesses, attain health care information, participate in e-government, and raise awareness on social issues.

## **INTERFAITH RESOURCES**

Following is a brief list of interfaith organisations, academic centers, and other resources to help you learn more about inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. If you have others to recommend, please let us know.

## **INTERFAITH ORGANISATIONS**

- Buxton Initiative

The initiative is developing practical ways to facilitate dialogue among people of different faiths and life experiences to build

---

understanding, friendship, and collaboration. It has extended its conversation to include ambassadors, CEOs, policymakers, senators, military leaders, journalists, and through its Young Leaders Programme, young Christians and Muslims.

- **Interfaith Alliance**

Founded in 1994 by an interfaith group of religious leaders, the alliance promotes interfaith cooperation around shared religious values to strengthen the public's commitment to civic participation, freedom of religion, diversity, and civility in public discourse. It also encourages the active involvement of people of faith in the nation's political life.
- **Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility**

For more than 30 years, the Interfaith ICCR has been a leader in the corporate social responsibility movement. Its membership is made up of 275 faith-based institutional investors including national denominations, religious communities, pension funds, endowments, hospital corporations, economic development funds and publishing companies, which press companies to be socially and environmentally responsible. The combined portfolio value of ICCR's member organisations is estimated at \$110 billion.
- **Interfaith Youth Core**

This organisation employs innovative programme models and a capacity building approach with the goal of building a movement that encourages young people of faith to strengthen their religious identities, work toward inter-religious understanding, and cooperate to serve the local and global community.
- **Institute of Interfaith Dialog**

The IID is a non-profit organisation that aims to unite global communities through interfaith dialogue, highlighting both the differences and similarities in cultures and religions to achieve world peace.
- **International Committee for the Peace Council**

The council's mission is to demonstrate that peace and effective inter-religious collaboration is possible. Peace Councilors promote the example of collaboration between leaders from different religious communities to relieve suffering.
- **International Council of Christians and Jews**

An umbrella organisation encompassing 38 national Jewish-Christian dialogue groups worldwide, the ICCJ works to promote



understanding between Christians and Jews; address issues of human rights; counter prejudice, intolerance, discrimination, racism, and the misuse of religion for national and political domination; coordinate face-to-face exchanges of experience and expertise; encourage research and education; perform outreach in regions with little structured Jewish-Christian dialogue; and provide a platform for wide-ranging theological debate.

- **The World Faiths Development Dialogue**

Started in 1998 as an initiative of then-World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn and then-Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey, the organisation's aim is to facilitate an inter-religious dialogue on poverty and development, and interaction between religious leaders and international development institutions.

- **The World Conference of Religions for Peace**

The largest international coalition of representatives from the world's great religions dedicated to achieving peace, the organisation works on every continent to create multi-religious partnerships that mobilise religious people's moral and social resources to address their shared problems.

- **Seeds of Peace**

Founded in 1993, this organisation seeks to give young leaders from regions of conflict the leadership skills to promote reconciliation and coexistence. It Began with 46 Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian teenagers in 1993 and has expanded to include young leaders from South Asia, Cyprus, and the Balkans. More than 2,500 young people from four regions of conflict comprise its leadership network.

- **International Association for Religious Freedom**

The association works for global freedom of religion and belief. It includes more than 90 affiliated member groups in 25 countries, encompassing faith traditions including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Shintoism, and Sikhism, among others.

### **Academic Centers**

- **The American Religious Experience Project (West Virginia University)**

This collaboration between West Virginia University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Louisiana State University aims to engage both scholars and novices interested in studying American religion.



- American Academy of Religion  
Founded in 1909, the AAR is the world's largest association of academics who research or teach topics related to religion.
- The Center for the Study of Religion (Princeton University)  
The center's objective is to encourage intellectual exchange and interdisciplinary scholarly studies about religion via the humanities and social sciences.
- Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis)  
Established in 1989, this research and public outreach institute is devoted to promoting understanding of how religion relates to other aspects of American culture.
- Center for Christian-Jewish Learning (Boston College)  
The center is devoted to developing and implementing new relationships between Christians and Jews based not merely on toleration but on respect and enrichment — as outlined in Roman Catholic documents since the Second Vatican Council.
- Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Religion and Public Life (University of California, Santa Barbara)  
The center seeks to advance discussion of issues related to ethics, values and public life and to encourage non-partisan, non-sectarian civic participation. Among its key issues: pluralism; transnationalism; war and peace; environmental ethics; indigenous populations; politics; moral and ethical debates; civic engagement; and the role of religious influences in society.
- The Louisville Institute  
This Lilly Endowment programme for the study of American religion based at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary seeks to enrich American Christians' religious life and to encourage the revitalization of their institutions by bringing together religious leaders and scholars.
- The Material History of American Religion Project  
Between 1995 and 2001, this project based at Vanderbilt University's Divinity School studied the complex history of American religion by focusing on material objects and economic themes.
- The Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life (Trinity College)

This center was established in 1996 to advance knowledge and understanding of the varied roles that religious movements, institutions, and ideas play in the contemporary world; to explore challenges posed by religious pluralism and tensions between religious and secular values; and to examine the influence of religion on politics, civic culture, family life, gender roles, and other issues in the U.S. and worldwide. Non-sectarian and non-partisan, its initiatives aim to foster discussion of religion in public life.

- The Martin Marty Center (University of Chicago Divinity School)  
Through consultations, conferences, and publications, the center brings scholarly perspectives to bear on religious questions facing the wider public and encourages scholars to anchor their academic questions to the a broader culture.

- The Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (Georgetown University)

Founded to build stronger bridge of understanding between the Muslim world and the West as well as between Islam and Christianity, the center focuses on the breadth of the Muslim world, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, Europe, and America. It has become an internationally recognised leader in the field of Muslim-Christian relations.

- Education as Transformation

This international organisation works with colleges, universities, K-12 schools and related institutions to explore: the impact of religious diversity on education and strategies to address it; the role of spirituality in educational institutions; the cultivation of values; moral and ethical development; and the fostering of global learning communities and responsible global citizens.

- Center for Religion and Civic Culture (University of Southern California)

An organised research unit of the university's College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the center promotes discipline-based, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary research about how religion and religious institutions are involved in civic culture.

- The Jewish/Muslim Initiative (University of Illinois, Chicago)

Sponsored by the Jewish Studies Programme at the university's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Institute for Law and the Humanities, Chicago-Kent College of Law, and Illinois Institute

---

of Technology, the programme includes community outreach to encourage communication between the religions, a yearly course, and a visiting professorship.

- Institute for the Study of American Religion

The institute monitors all of the religious denominations, organisations, and movements in North America and publishes a series of reference books about them, including the Encyclopedia of American Religions.

### Other Resources

- Religion Source

Religion expert referral site for journalists.

- Religion and Religious Cultural Studies Web Search Project

Reference website linking to religion and religious resources dealing with American studies.

- Book Review: 'America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity'  
In "America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity," Robert Wuthnow, a sociologist at Princeton and the director of the university's Center for the Study of Religion, examines how Americans deal with the country's diverse creeds.

- Beliefnet

A multi-faith e-community designed to help people meet their own religious and spiritual needs — in an interesting, captivating and engaging way. Not affiliated with a particular religion or spiritual movement, Beliefnet aims to help people find their own. The site has a collection of experts and scholars, spiritual tools, and an array of discussions and dialogue groups.

- The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life

Launched in 2001, the forum seeks to promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs with timely, impartial information to national opinion leaders, including government officials and journalists. A nonpartisan, non-advocacy organisation, the organisation does not take positions on policy debates, and functions as both a clearinghouse and a town hall. It also compiles a religion in the news feature.

- Multifaithnet

A self-access research, learning, information and dialogue tool, this site provides updated access to global electronic resources

and interactions useful for the study of world religious traditions and communities and the practice of interfaith dialogue.

### APPROACH

The Case Foundation, created by Steve and Jean Case in 1997, supports individuals and organisations that have the strategy, leadership, and commitment to make positive, widespread social change. In forming partnerships and making investments, we look for people and groups that have the ability to scale and sustain their impact over the long term.

Based in Washington, D.C., the foundation invests in meeting the needs of underserved children and families; creating thriving and sustainable economic development for communities; bridging cultural and religious divides; expanding civic engagement and volunteerism; and accelerating innovative approaches to health care.

*We value collaboration and seek opportunities to bring together individuals and organisations to pursue common interests and meet shared challenges*

The Case Foundation invests its time and money in people and initiatives that are committed to collaboration. We have learned that partnerships leveraging intellectual capital, expertise, and relationships lead more quickly to significant results. Because we seek lasting, sustainable solutions to complex issues, we strive to stimulate additional partnerships and generous giving by others. A grant is just one facet of the integrated relationship we create with our partners.

*We invest in dynamic people and organisations that have the capacity to go to scale and make a lasting impact*

Recognising that having the right leadership in place is critical to any organisation's success, we invest our time and resources into developing and supporting outstanding leadership in the social sector. We seek to identify excellence and "best in class" leaders and organisations that are ready to scale their work to increase their impact. Many social entrepreneurs face significant organisational challenges—fundraising, board development, new talent acquisition, and marketing and communications plans—just as they reach the point when they are ready to scale.

We work closely with our partners to ensure that leaders have the professional and personal resources they need to grow successfully.

*We support new and innovative approaches, including business models that enhance nonprofits' effectiveness and sustainability.*

---

Jean and Steve Case have become keenly aware that the market forces that help outstanding business entrepreneurs succeed are absent in the nonprofit sector. Many of the social entrepreneurs the foundation has worked with are frustrated with inefficiencies in the nonprofit sector. Organisations with a shared mission often compete for resources rather than working together to advance their common agenda.

The Case Foundation encourages entrepreneurship in the organisations we support, seeking to facilitate sustainable impact. In particular, we value entrepreneurial business models that can generate a recurring revenue stream to reduce nonprofits' reliance on grants. We also seek opportunities to invest in nonprofits that want to expand by supplementing grants with earned income, and we are also interested in the emerging category of "not-only-for-profits" — businesses that seek to grow profitably and in a sustainable way, while satisfying important societal goals.

### **CITIZENS AT THE CENTER: A NEW APPROACH TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Getting citizens more involved in the civic life and health of their communities must begin with citizens themselves, according to *Citizens at the Center: A New Approach to Civic Engagement*, written by Dr. Cynthia Gibson and commissioned by the Case Foundation. Based on interviews with researchers and experts in service/civic engagement, politics, and marketing,

Stay informed about the Make It Your Own Awards™, our new citizen-centered grants programme. Take Action today!

the paper offers specific recommendations for giving citizens the tools they need to identify problems and develop solutions — and warns against top-down solutions that require people to "plug into" existing programmes or campaigns.

Many Americans have turned away from politics and political institutions for the same reasons they have turned away from other civic institutions—a sense that what they do matters little when it comes to the civic life and health of their communities or the country. Shifting to an approach that puts citizens at the center can be a powerful way to help ordinary people take action on the problems that are most important to them, and in the ways they choose.

### **Recommendations**

To develop and adopt citizen-centered approaches, the service and civic engagement field should:

- Shift the focus. Instead of asking how to encourage civic engagement, consider the best ways to give people opportunities to define and solve problems themselves.
- Start young. Don't wait till high school to begin developing the basic skills that young people will need to be effective problem-solvers.
- Involve all community institutions. Engage faith-based organisations, schools, businesses, and government agencies in providing public deliberation and problem-solving for all citizens.
- Use technology to create a new kind of "public commons." Leverage technology's power to encourage, facilitate, and increase citizen-centered dialogue, deliberation, organising, and action around a wide variety of issues.
- Explore and create new mechanisms. Don't assume that traditional venues like town hall meetings are sufficient to truly get different types of people to engage and share perspectives. Look at where people are already interacting (such as neighborhood organisations, schools, and workplaces) and consider other approaches, structures, and venues.
- Conduct rigorous research about what works and why. While considerable research has been conducted on the levels of volunteering, voting, community service, and political participation, there is a need for more evaluation about the motivating forces behind such behaviours—and what approaches are effectively solving community problems.
- Encourage more funding for these approaches. Many funders may be reluctant to support long-term, local efforts, preferring to support bigger initiatives with a more immediate "payoff." Attracting more funding will require demonstrating the concrete results of local deliberation and action.
- Help communities move from deliberation to action. Deliberation should serve as a means to the end of communities being able to take action collectively in ways that reap results they can see and experience.

### **What Do Citizen-Centered Approaches Look Like?**

- They focus primarily on culture change, rather than short-term outcomes, issues, or victories.
- They provide opportunities for people to form and promote their own decisions, build capacities for self-government, and promote open-ended civic processes.



- They are pluralistic and nonpartisan.
- They help to transcend ideological silos.
- They get beyond the debate over whether service or political action is more important.
- They're not just about talking.
- They do not replace politics or other democratic processes.

#### COMMENTS:

John Dedrick, Kettering Foundation:

*"Citizens at the Center* develops a critical synthesis of an emergent approach to understanding and acting in the context of democratic politics. Cindy Gibson has made another vital contribution to the field!"

Jayne Cravens, Coyote Communications:

It was nice to read an affirmation of so much of what was said and profiled at the NetSquared Conference back in May.

What I would like to see in this and other similar efforts is an acknowledgement that the American work week is more prohibitive than ever to allow people to volunteer or be otherwise involved in civic activities. It's to the point that a sizeable percentage of Americans don't even take their tiny two-week vacations, or if they do, work the entire time via their laptops and Blackberries. IMO, there is no more time to volunteer or to be engaged in the community; there must be a serious re-thinking of what the American work week should look like in order to create time for people to again be involved in their communities.

Another thing I would like to see highlighted is the frustration I am hearing again and again from people who want to volunteer or to be a political activist: When they look for information about a particular local organisation, particularly traditional local political groups, they cannot find the information needed online. No website, or a website that just says "information coming soon." Or, worse, they email organisations for more information, with questions, with an expression of interest in being involved, etc., and they receive no reply, or a "We'll get back to you!" message that's never followed up. It's 2006! How can tiny new all-volunteer nonprofits be doing such a great job online while established, traditional organisations are still thinking about maybe doing something online at some point?

On the flip side, if an organisation goes to a corporate funder and says they want funding for a full-time volunteer manager, for technology,

or for staff training to better use technology, the corporate funder balks. "We want our money to go to programme, not to administration," they cry. Therefore, organisations are, in many ways, set up for failure when it comes to responding to the new wave of community engagement outlined in this paper.

Matt Leighninger, Executive Director, Deliberative Democracy Consortium:

Citizens at the Center is a breakthrough because it challenges some of the predominant assumptions held by national civic thinkers and experts. Gibson questions the kind of civic work that starts out with an abstract model of what citizens ought to be (voters, volunteers, etc.), and then tries various ways of convincing, recruiting, or training people to fulfill those valuable but limited roles.

I think these kinds of projects can be beneficial, but they are not driving the current tectonic shift in democracy. The real catalysts for change are the political breakdowns that have frustrated citizens and public officials—bankrupt city governments, instances of police misconduct, and angry debates over school closures, landfills, or housing developments. These are symptoms of a changed citizen-government dynamic: Citizens are better at governing, and worse at being governed, than ever before.

All kinds of public leaders, including mayors, school superintendents, and neighborhood organizers (and increasingly, state and federal officials as well), are reacting to this trend by experimenting with citizen-centered approaches. Some of these projects are successful, some aren't—and even the most successful examples raise interesting new questions and challenges. Citizen-centered projects are proliferating much faster than most of us realise—Gibson's bulleted list is but the tip of the iceberg—and they are moving forward without a high degree of attention, evaluation, or support from national civic organisations, foundations, or other observers. We have been looking off into the distance at remote civic archetypes; Citizens at the Center helps us refocus on a phenomenon that is suddenly right in front of us.

Lisa Frank, Youth Innovation Fund, National Service-Learning Partnership:

As one of the many young people involved with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Youth Innovation Fund (mentioned in the report and in comments by Kenny Holdsman), I second the idea that giving youth the opportunity to take control of civic action and service-learning

---

projects is essential. Since we (the Portland, Ore., Youth Innovation Fund) had a youth-led board that did its own research, wrote requests for proposals, and had the final say in giving mini-grants to other youth-led service-learning projects, we were able to involve the key components of quality service-learning—learning, community impact, youth leadership, and reflection. We were able to watch each other and ourselves grow more confident, more concerned with education, and ultimately better citizens. By beginning civics-related education at a young age and making all teaching hands-on with results youth can see and be proud of, the next generations will be prepared for a life of dedication to their school work, community, and country. It is important to let young people experience these types of civic action to open their eyes to the field of service-learning, which is shown to be one of the best ways to improve civic engagement in youth. Once you are involved in one service-learning project, you become aware of what others are doing in your city and country and are motivated to implement more positive permanent change, setting the example for those who come after you. It is this method that will lead to the day when it is commonplace for young people to be respected as intelligent, active citizens.

Will Friedman, Executive Director, and Alison Kadlec, Associate Director, Center for Advances in Public Engagement at Public Agenda:

Like most of the respondents in this space, and along with our colleagues at Public Agenda, we are heartened by Cynthia Gibson's analysis and argument for a citizen-centered approach to civic engagement. Her essay provides a cogent overview of critical issues, challenging practitioners, theorists and funders alike to think about democratic citizenship in fresh ways. We'd like to offer reflections on a few key points.

First, rather than pitting culture change against "short-term outcomes, issues, or victories," we suggest that we ask instead how citizens can pursue tangible progress on concrete problems facing their communities in ways that create, rather than obstruct, democratic habits and culture. People come to the democratic table to address common concerns and move ahead on common projects, not as a response to abstract calls for a more democratic culture. But *how* the approach to such problems and projects are structured and pursued (as Gibson makes clear) makes all the difference as to whether people are encouraged to become passive consumers or enabled to become active citizens. (For those who might be interested, this theme is

developed in our recent article, "Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Power.")

Second, while it is critically important to liberate the concept and practice of civic engagement from volunteering and voting alone, as Gibson does, we would add that it is also useful to think through the potential relationship between the personal and individualistic acts of voting/volunteering and the inherently social and public character of citizen-centered problem-solving. At the heart of the latter is the work of citizens deliberating together, in full recognition of their differences, about the shared consequences of public decisions. It is this which makes civic engagement a critical engine for democratic culture change in ways that the personal choices to vote or volunteer, which require no consultation beyond our own preferences, do not.

Moreover, and to the present point, *deliberative civic engagement is what makes voting and volunteering most meaningfully democratic*, transforming them from purely individual acts and weaving them into the public fabric of a vital and expanding democratic culture. As a practical example of how this can look, during the '04 election cycle Public Agenda ran a campaign called "First Choice: Know *What* You Want Before You Decide *Who* You Want." The idea was to provide citizens with tools to deliberate with others about issues they cared about so they could better decide for themselves who they wanted to vote for.

Citizen-centered civic engagement of this type aims to enrich and deepen the democratic meaning of voting by embedding it in a larger process of public dialogue and deliberation. The same holds true for volunteering; when it is the outcome of public conversation rather than a substitute for it, volunteering is an expression of a shared and deepening understanding of public life and how to be of service within it.

Finally, we'd like to expand on Gibson's exhortation to "conduct rigorous research" on citizen-centered civic engagement in American life by suggesting that such research include serious attention to the obstacles to deliberative engagement that proliferate in our political culture today, as well as emerging opportunities to overcome these obstacles. For example:

- What are the forces and habits that breed and reinforce the hostile, polarising rhetoric that characterises most of what passes for "public discourse" today, and what is the impact of those

---

forces and habits on citizens' capacity for and willingness to engage in dialogue across boundaries?

- Are citizens tiring of today's degraded public rhetoric—as seems to us to be the case—and if so, how can citizen-centered strategies take advantage of this discontent?
- In a society encumbered by deep-seated inequality, what conditions are required for the creation of genuinely inclusive opportunities for civic engagement for those individuals and groups that are least likely to be included and most likely to be cynical about public dialogue and participation?
- How can such attributes of the Internet as enhanced access to information and rapid networking be used to offset societal inequalities and generally, to empower citizens and enable dialogue across boundaries, rather than to increase existing tendencies toward segmentation and polarization?
- How do different choices in the design and facilitation of citizen-centered engagement impact participation, and which choices are most likely to foster ongoing commitment to collaboration and problem-solving among citizens?
- Under what conditions and through what strategies is citizen-centered civic engagement likely to lead to broader impact and foster change, and how can we gauge different sorts of impacts over time? This last item means to reinforce Hal Saunder's call for a better articulated theory of change. If the civic engagement field is to fulfill the promise so richly suggested by Gibson's essay, such a conceptualization will be a critical step.

Ami Dar, Executive Director, Action Without Borders—Idealist.org: I just read Cindy's paper, and I agree with every word. People all over the world want to get involved in their communities, but before jumping in, they want to know that their drop in the bucket will be joined by others, and that their actions will truly have an impact. Otherwise, why bother? This has always been true, but I believe that we are now living through a special moment in history: all over the world there are people who share similar dreams and challenges, and these people—all of us—can now connect and communicate like never before. The challenge now is to connect all these dots, and launch a global network of people and organisations who want to change the world by creating opportunities for action and collaboration for everyone. At Idealist, we have been working on this for the past few years, and later this month, on October 16, we'll be launching a new



version of Idealist.org that will invite people everywhere to start building this network. Visit us then, and thanks again Cindy for this wonderful paper.

Ruth Wooden, President, Public Agenda: I would like to look further at the issue of making certain that dialogue and engagement with citizens is authentic, and not an exercise to overly structure or control the conversation to try to get to a “desired point of view.” Too many so-called “citizen feedback” events are designed to sell a position, and the organizers are working more on marketing or “getting the right message” than in keeping the engagement totally open to citizen viewpoints. There’s a real “learning deficit” operating in these situations, to use Alison Fine’s term from her new book *Momentum*, and in fact, these dialogues are public relations exercises more than a true citizen engagements.

Given that the current political environment is so polarised (which is well described as a big part of the problem in Dr. Gibson’s report), there’s a tendency today for everyone (including nonprofits) to operate in “advocacy” mode, but it’s not appropriate or helpful to look at public engagement as an advocacy tool. There may be useful findings that emerge for advocacy and messaging, but that’s not the purpose of citizen-centered engagement.

Harold H. Saunders, President, International Institute for Sustained Dialogue: I strongly endorse the direction of Cynthia Gibson’s paper on “citizen-centered approaches to citizen engagement.” I would like to take a step further by developing explicitly two critical points to which she alludes tangentially in her paper. She rightly speaks of civic engagement as an open-ended civic process—not just an act, a tactic, or a practice. She speaks of citizens coming together, deliberating, and acting collectively. Although she appropriately sets our sights on culture change rather than on short term outcomes, at the same time she quotes a warning: “If people are just engaged in process and not results, it’s an empty promise.” Two points:

First, if rather than short-term outcomes, culture change is the objective, we need a rigorous strategy or theory of change deeply rooted in experience. If we are going to focus on citizen-centered approaches, we must understand in depth how they work, how to teach them, and how to conduct them to produce fundamental change.

A theory of change must analyze:

- what brings citizens together;
- what causes them to see themselves as political actors;



- 
- how they select an instrument for change and learn how to use it;
  - how a change process transforms relationships that block change into relationships that can design and implement change; and
  - how citizens in dialogue can design a scenario of interactive steps to engage larger numbers of citizens in actions that result in fundamental change.

To prepare citizens for such change processes, we need schools and colleges that recognise the value of rigorously designed student (citizen)-driven learning processes for probing and transforming relationships. Active citizenship is learned by acting, not in the classroom. We need foundations that value not just knowledge delivered by faculties or experts, but knowledge generated and conceptualised by students or citizens through their own interactive processes.

Second, I fully understand that citizens must feel a sense that they can produce “results,” but we need to define “results” more thoughtfully than is normal. Those of us who have engaged actively in change processes in difficult conditions over time know that defining and assessing “results” is a more complex subject than is commonly recognised. More time and work are needed.

I cite Einstein’s statement that thinking about problems in the same mode of thought that produced them will not lead to durable solutions. If we think about politics as what governments and politicians do, we will define “results” one way. If we define politics to include what citizens do when they come together to solve problems, we will define “results” differently.

Conventional problem-solving techniques focus on the problems—not on the underlying relationships that caused them. Changing a problem-causing relationship — which we cannot always see — may be a more important “result” than a “result” we can see. Citizens feel when this happens; most experts don’t think about it.

Experience over more than four decades in dealing with some of the world’s most intractable relationships has taught me that we must focus on problem-causing relationships in order to produce solutions—real results. Producing real results depends on defining real problems. Producing real results requires defining results in terms of a citizen-centered understanding of politics. We need time, patience, diligent work—and new thinking about politics—for the continuing experiments required.

In sum, focusing on citizen-centered approaches to civic engagement is an essential step. To make such approaches a reality and to produce serious change will require all of us to work together in new ways yet to be widely understood.

Ira Harkavy, Director, Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania: Cindy Gibson's *Citizens at the Center* is extraordinarily timely and significant. It directs attention to the need for a profound deepening and strengthening of civic engagement in American society. Her call for a civic renewal movement that spring from the interests, concerns, talents, and actions of citizens themselves is powerful and convincing. She also moves discussion from narrow, academic (in the pejorative sense) debates about service versus politics to the significant real-world intellectual question of *how* to produce sustained, significant, serious cultural change (and by implication, serious social change) that involves a shift in attitudes, values, relationships, and actions. And Gibson provides us with a way forward that includes an emphasis on youth, collaboration and institutional partnerships, and a focus on action, not just deliberation.

Needless to say, Gibson has not (nor could she have) provided us a map for increased civic engagement. Her report does, however, lead to a number of important questions. For example:

- What groups and institutions, under what circumstances, are likely to catalyze and lead a civic renewal movement?
- What could be done to encourage these groups and institutions to take actions likely to lead to a civic renewal movement?
- How can civic renewal be "institutionalised" — that is, how can schools, colleges and universities, communities of faith, unions, businesses, and governmental agencies, etc. function as civic institutions that encourage and support citizen-centered engagement?

To put it mildly, those are very hard questions indeed. In the hope of provoking discussion (not providing anything like an adequate answer), I propose that colleges and universities are among the most strategic institutions for catalysing a civic renewal movement. For colleges and universities to function as civic institutions, they will have to be pushed and prodded. One of the best ways to push and to prod is to support and/or hold back financial support. From here on in, we might consider supporting institutions, including higher educational institutions, on the basis of the Noah Principle: "No more

---

prizes for predicting rain, prizes only for building the arks." In short, foundations and government might make "civic renewal" the performance standard on which to base their prizes and awards.

In my judgment, the "Noah Principle" strategy logically extends arguments advanced in Cindy Gibson's first-rate report. Regardless, Gibson is to be applauded for the contributions *Citizens at the Center* makes to the development of a powerful and effective approach to civic engagement.

Peter Levine, Director, CIRCLE (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)

I think Cindy Gibson's paper is a conceptual breakthrough and a profound challenge to mainstream thinking on both right and left.

Here I'd like to respond to two important questions that Les Lenkowsky raises: First, "How engaged should we expect American citizens to be?...How do we know they aren't as engaged as they want to be right now?" Second, "Is the rise in volunteering really of small importance for civic engagement? Or is it an effective, long-term strategy?"

Our civic health is pretty bad, and the increasing rate of volunteering — while welcome — doesn't solve the problem. Each year in the 1970s (as shown in America's Civic Health Index) about 45 percent of Americans said that they worked with others to address community problems. That rate has dropped to about 25 percent in the current decade. Most of the decline has been among people with lower education levels, so that community problem-solving is now the preserve of college graduates. The rate of membership in associations is fairly constant, but the frequency of attending meetings has fallen. We still have organisations, but there is considerably less citizen-to-citizen discussion and problem-solving.

Why should we care? Partly because working on public problems is intrinsically valuable and dignified. Encouraging others to participate recognises their dignity. However, most people don't buy that pair of rather idealistic arguments. They may be more persuaded by the evidence (which is quite strong) that institutions work better when many people participate.

For example, Robert Putnam has shown that American "states where citizens meet, join, vote, and trust in unusual measure boast consistently higher educational performance than states where citizens are less engaged with civic and community life." Putnam finds that

such engagement is “by far” a bigger correlate of educational outcomes than is spending on education, teachers’ salaries, class size, or demographics. Putnam’s measures do not include explicit questions about “working together on public problems.” But James Coleman’s original theory of “social capital” suggests that it is a community’s actual capacity to cooperate that boosts social outcomes.

Active citizens check corruption and mismanagement. They also reduce the burdens on public institutions, such as schools, by lending their own passions, ideas, and labour. Governments work better when people communicate among themselves about public problems. As Lew Friedland writes, “communities in which there are rich, cross-cutting networks of association and public discussion are more likely to formulate real problems, apply and test... solutions, learn from them, and correct them if they are flawed: in short, to rule themselves, or work democratically.”

Volunteering correlates with the other forms of civic engagement and can be a strategy for getting people fully involved in their communities. However, when we specifically ask people whether they have worked with other people to address common problems, we find a low and falling rate. In CIRCLE’s 2002 survey, just 20 percent of the volunteers (and 10 percent of young volunteers) described their participation as a way to address a “social or political problem.”

At the recent launch of America’s Civic Health Index, Bill Galston said that Hurricane Katrina demonstrated a failure of government and political leadership—but also of civil society, because it displayed our inability (or unwillingness) to work together across differences. Nina Rees replied that the “private sector” had performed very well after Katrina, as revealed by the massive amount of philanthropy directed toward New Orleans and the Gulf. I’m with Bill, because I think there’s a difference between the total amount of individual voluntary effort (also known as “the private sector”) and civil society.

New Orleans is rich in groups and associations that operate within discrete neighborhoods and ethnic communities—including the extraordinary African American mutual benefit societies. But there is, and was, a dearth of civic institutions. New Orleans had few voluntary associations that crossed community lines so that they could coordinate efforts, allocate private resources fairly, monitor the government, organise deliberations about justice, encourage citywide solidarity, and develop plans for redevelopment. In the absence of an encompassing civic infrastructure, New Orleans got bad government and ineffective

---

or piecemeal private aid. Thus the Katrina disaster illustrates the importance of decent political leadership, but also the need for a strong civil society that goes beyond charity and volunteering. (Incidentally, Louisiana ranks 49th in volunteering.)

Jonathan F. Zaff, Ph.D., Vice President, Research and Policy Development, America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth, and Founder, 18-25

Cindy should be applauded for taking a bold stance and moving the dialogue from a traditional “service” or “civic” paradigm, to a citizen-centered focus that lays-out practical strategies for engaging all citizens in public life. Too often, service and civic strategies leverage the might of a small percentage of civic or service exemplars—these are the individuals who already know how to “plug in” to the top-down opportunities in communities throughout the country. Instead, to have a civil society and a truly representative democracy, Cindy puts forth a call for more “power to the people,” laying out a strategy that meets people where they live, work, and congregate and empowers average citizens to take action to improve their communities’ and country’s well-being. Importantly, we cannot wait until after high school to educate and empower citizens. Just as developmental scientists recognise the need to start early for cognitive growth, we also recognise that civic skills, knowledge, and motivation are nurtured from early age. Implementing age and culturally appropriate strategies are therefore essential to this citizen-centered equation.

Linda Nguyen and Peter Goldberg, Alliance for Children and Families:

This is a great paper at a critical time. The citizen-centered approach is different than the way some people/institutions have tried to support and facilitate this work. It is about creating spaces for citizens to come together and figure out for themselves what they care about and what they would like to address—as opposed to just “plugging” them into our already existing advocacy structures or agendas.

A discussion arose at the United Neighborhood Centers of America conference around mobilising clients on behalf of the agency’s needs (needs which the agency would presume are in unison with the needs of the community). Someone asked a very good question—if you don’t have the time to facilitate processes that allow people to come together and decide for themselves how they would like to address certain problems, isn’t it better than nothing that you are mobilising them to



become engaged around issues that you've (as an institution dedicated to the health and improvement of the community) identified are the pressing issues? Isn't it empowerment when you are helping those you serve see the bigger picture and invite them to take an active part in addressing it?

Presumably, Cindy would say no in response to each of these questions.

During this same discussion, a couple people agreed that it was important to identify ways to initially get people involved at a deeper level beyond the services they receive. One person posited that individuals, particularly those facing a lot of barriers, need structure to begin with. They need to engage in civic learning. Someone else asked, "OK, then at what point do you stop facilitating? When you just don't have time anymore, or when you sense that they can do it on their own? Either way, it is the institution's decision, isn't it?"

Some of this is about thinking about how we talk about this work. We should consider using more terminology like "support" and "encouragement," rather than "guidance" or "mobilization." We have a lot of work ahead of us in encouraging institutions to support citizen-centered approaches. Cindy Gibson's paper definitely helps us think more critically about the careful and deep work that needs to occur in order to reach fundamental, long term change.

Carmen Sirianni, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy, Brandeis University:

*Citizens at the Center* makes a vital contribution to the debate on the state of our democracy because it poses questions that go deeper than indicators of volunteering or voting and focuses on developing a cultural ethos of engagement, along with the skills and organisational capacities for public problem solving that citizens require to be effective in today's world. It draws not only upon scholarly research, but also from interviews among those across the political spectrum who can see beyond partisan labels in their efforts to bring genuine civic conversation and collaborative work to the public arena. Despite many indicators that our civic life is in trouble, there are also many innovative forms of engagement that have emerged in recent years, as well as promising policy designs that can support rather than undermine robust civic work.

*Citizens at the Center* further reinforces the case that we must deepen civic innovation, move beyond ideological silos, and reframe the



everyday work of citizenship. And it recognises that, in order to compete against all the forces that tend to erode self-government in contemporary society, we need to build a broad and pluralistic civic renewal movement that can powerfully connect the many disparate forms of community service, collaborative problem solving, youth engagement, and community organising — and, yes, mix these up in new ways with all the other forms of advocacy and partisan politics that are part of a vibrant democracy. A wonderful piece that will spark some hard thinking and hopefully some new forms of collaboration across the broad civic engagement field.

Leslie Lenkowsky, Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University:

Cynthia Gibson has done a good job of recounting the state of thinking about civic engagement. But she has not addressed — perhaps because it was not her task to do so — a number of big questions that those who wish to see this discussion move forward need to face. Namely:

1. What is the relationship between the various strategies suggested in the second part of the paper and the problems — ranging from low voter turnout to loneliness — cited in the front part? Why should we assume that a more engaged populace will be a more satisfied one?
2. Will greater civic engagement really produce consensus on the “common good”? Does that assume there is more agreement on the “common good” than really exists among the American people? Does it diminish the importance of real differences of opinion on public matters? And what is the “common good” anyway?
3. How engaged should we expect American citizens to be? And if we can’t say for sure, how do we know they aren’t as engaged as they want to be right now? Is the association of civic engagement efforts with the supposed need to achieve change helpful or harmful, if Americans are reluctant to become more active in addressing their current dissatisfactions?
4. Since there is plenty of data to indicate that people who volunteer are more likely to vote, read, etc., is the rise in volunteering really of small importance for civic engagement? Or is it an effective, long-term strategy?
5. Since some research has already indicated that the Internet may increase social isolation, are the new digital technologies really

an ally of civic engagement? Or will they be a hindrance? Are Wikipedia (and blogs) likely to enhance civic knowledge? Or are they likely to contribute further to the ignorance of or confusion about American history and government that's already widespread among the public? Should more effort be placed on civic knowledge-building efforts, rather than fostering new types of civic participation?

Marnie Webb, Vice President for Knowledge Services, Compu Mentor:

In our current work, and especially in work with public libraries supported by the Gates Foundation, we are trying to model deploying technology to generate the kind of civic engagement Dr. Gibson advocates. And we hope to push this even further—by working with partners like CivicSpace Labs to develop the toolsets—the commons—that the paper discusses.

As always, there is a gap between saying “This is what should be done” and actually doing it. One of our ideas is to create a very concrete guide to using new technologies to promote citizen-centered engagement. It could be progressive — “here’s an easy way to start out” —and then build to more complex things.

Often, I think, we implicitly encourage folks jumping in on the deep end of building technology solutions. It’s tempting to read the paper and start imagining the comprehensive wiki or Drupal or Plone platform that can help encourage the kind of engagement talked about. But, short of creating new platforms, it is possible to utilise the vast amount of content already out there—blog posts, shared photos, Wikipedia entries—to get at some of things talked about. It seems important to identify and promulgate the small, immediate ways that passionate people can deploy existing technology to move this agenda forward. It would be great to do a fully featured how-to to help move this agenda.

Liz Hollander, Executive Director, Campus Compact:

In the early 1830s, Alexis DeToqueville characterised American democracy by saying “the duties of private citizens are not supposed to have lapsed because the state has come into action; but every one is ready, on the contrary, to guide and support it. This action of individuals, joined to that of the public authorities, frequently accomplishes what the most energetic centralised administration would be unable to do.”

---

Gibson's paper makes a very strong case for recapturing this genius of our American democratic way of life. At Campus Compact, we have always promoted "public and community service to develop the skills and habits of citizenship" in college students but what we have learned is that the one does not necessarily lead to the other without conscious effort. Students need to join their enthusiasm for making a difference with subtle understanding of the assets in challenged communities and the work they can do to build community capacity. Students need to understand systemic causes of social and economic ills and the ways that citizens can engage in their democracy to address them.

We talk about doing the "hard work" of democracy, because true participation is not simple. As Commissioner of Planning in Chicago, I was constantly confronted with different communities within each geographic community—homeowners, renters, preservationists, developers, champions of low-income housing, and "not in my backyards." The most powerful plans for neighborhood revitalization are shaped through broad citizen participation efforts in which these interests have to sit at the table together with the public authorities and seek common interest. It's messy and patient work, but as Robert Putnam puts it, "better together."

Tom Erlich, Senior Scholar, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching:

Cynthia Gibson has written an important and provocative essay on civic engagement. The message that citizen-centered participation and deliberation can work and should be encouraged is a welcome one. My colleagues and I at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching have written a book titled *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Political Engagement*, published by Jossey-Bass. The book deals directly with how colleges and universities can promote the understanding, skills, and attitudes needed for citizen-centered engagement.

It is true, as the essay indicates, that many people, especially young people, do not view public policy-making and electoral politics as arenas where they can make a difference. We argue in our book, however, that American democracy needs citizen participation in politics, broadly defined, and that institutions of higher education have both the opportunity and the obligation to educate their students to become politically engaged. We focus on 21 courses and programmes at a range of different colleges and universities and analyze the goals of

this education, the strategies to achieve those goals, and the ways to promote open inquiry and avoid political bias in the process.

Judy Woodruff, "NewsHour":

Cindy has done terrific and important work, and I know it will be a spur to action for those who care about the health of our democracy. To confirm some of Cindy's findings, I've seen in my own conversations this summer with American young people that the more they feel their voices are listened to, the more they feel they have serious opportunities to contribute to the public dialogue, and to take responsibility for outcomes, the more likely they are to engage in the civic fabric of the nation. On the other hand, when they see public figures acting in ways that don't represent their views and values, when they feel left out of the dialogue, the more powerless they feel to impact change.

Kenny Holdsman, Academy for Educational Development:

*Citizens at the Center* makes an important and compelling argument that in order for citizen involvement to become a catalyst for community change and civic renewal, the philosophy and strategies of citizen engagement must be altered. In sum, they must become more organic, more inclusive, and in Dr. Gibson's words, the work of civic engagement must become more "citizen-centered" and "citizen-driven." ...The W.K. Kellogg Youth Innovation Fund, which is referenced in this paper, embraces the fundamental notion that youth-centered and youth-directed civic action is the most effective way to engage young citizens in the hard work of community change. The hundreds of young people who are actively involved in the Youth Fund's efforts are pursuing engagement approaches that intentionally move beyond volunteerism and charity work to more potent forms of change and justice-oriented action. The architects of the Youth Fund, based at the Kellogg Foundation and the National Service-Learning Partnership at AED, call these approaches "multiple action pathways" — approaches such as youth in governance, youth-generated media, youth philanthropy, youth social entrepreneurship, and youth organising. With supportive policies and structures, youth and citizen engagement can become a systemic part of the civic and political fabric of community life.

John Bridgeland, CEO, Civic Enterprises

This paper "breaks the silence." For those of us who have labored on the policymaking side of these issues and are confronted with the very real question "So how do we actually help foster a culture of

service and civic engagement?”, this paper is a breakthrough. It moves the discussion beyond the very hopeful movements in volunteer and national service and civic education to the hope that we can do much better—and foster a stronger ethic of civic engagement in our schools, workplaces, faith-based institutions, communities, and neighborhoods, not defined by experts or politicians or national leaders, but defined by us in local communities. To pull that off in any systemic way is the real challenge and is a challenge every generation has struggled with since our founding. Coupled with our new report, *Broken Engagement: America’s Civic Health Index*, which serves as a wake-up call to the country that our civic stock is declining and provides a few signs of hope upon which we can build, Cindy’s paper provides some specific ideas on how we might move forward. Well done!

Daniel Ben-Horin, Executive Director, CompuMentor

By referring to “technologists,” not “technology,” we make the point that the “movers,” the “agents” in this process of meaningful civic engagement, are people. These particular people (and their ranks are increasing almost exponentially) who know how to use technology are, in many cases, very open to using this technology in a civically engaged fashion, if they can but discern the opportunity. These people are fully able to communicate virtually, but, being people, they enjoy and need more visceral contact as well. So through this frame, the issue isn’t “Organise via technology or organise more traditionally?” but “How do we create a pathway into the process for technologists, and once they’re part of the discussion, inside and outside of organisations, how do we give them enough room and resources to make a difference?”

## EIGHT WORLD ASSEMBLY

### MISSION

*Religions for Peace* is the largest international coalition of representatives from the world’s great religions dedicated to promoting peace.

Respecting religious differences while celebrating our common humanity, *Religions for Peace* is active on every continent and in some of the most troubled areas of the world, creating multi-religious partnerships to confront our most dire issues: stopping war, ending poverty, and protecting the earth.

Religious communities are the largest and best-organised civil institutions in the world, claiming the allegiance of billions across race, class, and national divides. These communities have particular



cultural understandings, infrastructures, and resources to get help where it is needed most.

Founded in 1970, *Religions for Peace* enables these communities to unleash their enormous potential for common action. Some of *Religions for Peace's* recent successes include building a new climate of reconciliation in Iraq; mediating dialogue among warring factions in Sierra Leone; organising an international network of religious women's organisations; and establishing an extraordinary programme to assist the millions of children affected by Africa's AIDS pandemic, the Hope for African Children Initiative.

*Religions for Peace* brings together hundreds of key religious leaders every five years to discuss the great issues of our time. In August 2006, the Eighth World Assembly convened in Kyoto.

## **AFFILIATES**

Working in Cambodia Working on an international, regional, and national basis, *Religions for Peace* creates multi-religious partnerships that mobilise the moral and social resources of religious people to address their shared problems. *Religions for Peace* is active in more than 70 countries, working with national affiliates and regional organisations to find and implement local solutions to local challenges. In the world's great capitals and in remote rural villages, *Religions for Peace* affiliates empower religious communities to improve lives and promote peace.

## **WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL**

### **A NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT TO END WAR**

War Resisters' International was founded in 1921 under the name "Paco". It was and is based on the WRI declaration:

War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war.

War Resisters' International exists to promote non-violent action against the causes of war, and to support and connect people around the world who refuse to take part in war or the preparation of war. On this basis, WRI works for a world without war.

## **NON-VIOLENCE**

WRI embraces non-violence. For some, non-violence is a way of life. For all of us, it is a form of action that affirms life, speaks out against oppression, and acknowledges the value of each person.



Non-violence can combine active resistance, including civil disobedience, with dialogue; it can combine non-cooperation—withdrawal of support from a system of oppression—with constructive work to build alternatives.

As a way of engaging in conflict, sometimes non-violence attempts to bring reconciliation with it: strengthening the social fabric, empowering those at the bottom of society, and including people from different sides in seeking a solution.

## **NO TO WAR**

WRI will never endorse any kind of war, whether it is waged by a state, by a “liberation army”, or under the auspices of the United Nations, even if it is called a “humanitarian military intervention”. Wars, however noble the rhetoric, invariably are used to serve some power-political or economic interest. We know where war leads—to suffering and destruction, to rape and organised crime, to betrayal of values and to new structures of domination.

## **WRI'S PROGRAMME**

### **Non-violence Programme**

The Non-violence Programme is one of the two main programme areas for the WRI office and network, and encompasses two projects: the global initiative against war profiteers and the non-violence resources project. A full description of the project is available on this site in English, German, and Spanish.

### **The right to refuse to kill**

WRI's project “The right to refuse to kill” aims to work on three levels:

- Political campaigning and support for conscientious objectors' movements and COs facing repression or imprisonment, including organising and sending delegations, visiting imprisoned COs, solidarity campaigns, lobbying the international human rights system, etc. The international email list co-alert is a powerful tool to organise support for conscientious objectors.
- Support for asylum seekers and their lawyers, in cases of draft evasion, desertion, conscientious objection and other cases related to military service.
- Research and documentation of material related to conscientious objection and military recruitment—the CONCODOC project.

*Dealing with the past*

Resources for this programme area—active from 1998-2004 but presently unstaffed—can be found on the Dealing with the Past homepage.

**WRI PUBLICATIONS***CO Update*

This monthly digest of news on conscientious objection to military service is available in email and web [optimised for printing] editions.

*War Profiteers' News*

This new (2006) email newsletter provides information on the new developments on arms trade; the increasing role of private companies in the outsourcing of the military and private financial institutions as they profit from the arms trade.

*The Broken Rifle*

WRI's own magazine, published in four languages to give in-depth information on WRI's programme and campaigns.

*WRI Women*

The magazine of the WRI Women's Working Group provides information on women and militarism, and of women's activities all over the world.

**News from the Network**

News from the network is a list-based facility for the automated posting of WRI member groups' news releases onto the website.

*Books and reports*

WRI has published several books, including online-only titles, print-only titles, and some in both formats. An index of WRI's online books, longer reports available on the web, and WRI's print and microform archives, is available here.

International seminars are one important part of WRI's networking. Usually attached to WRI's yearly Council meeting, seminars focus on a theme of particular importance to War Resisters' International. Recent seminars include: "The Changing Face of the Military" (Germany, 1999) and "From Kosov@ to Seattle. What role for non-violent action?" (Britain, 2000). WRI seminars are open for participation by everybody.

### *International Conferences*

International (“Triennial”) Conferences are WRI’s regular grassroots meetings. They are organised at least once every four years, and bring together 200-300 activists from all parts of the world. The most recent Conferences were:

- To Live is to Resist: undoing the chain of violence (Brazil, in 1994).
- Choosing Peace Together (Croatia, in 1998).
- Stories and Strategies: non-violent resistance and social change (Ireland, in 2002).
- Globalising Non-violence (Germany, in 2006).

### *WRI actions*

War Resisters’ International coordinates two international days of action, both in support of peace activists and conscientious objectors.

- 15 May—International Conscientious Objectors’ Day  
15 May was first celebrated as a day of action in 1982. The day focusses on the struggle for the right to conscientious objection, and WRI usually highlights one particular struggle each year, while at the same time remembering those who served this cause in the past.
- 1 December—Prisoners for Peace Day  
Prisoners for Peace Day is a way to support those imprisoned for their stand against war and war preparations, by sending greeting cards to prisoners, and raising public awareness of prisoners for peace.

Prisoners for Peace Day was introduced in the 1950s, but its roots go back to the 1920s, when WRI called for sending Christmas greetings to prisoners.

## **HOW TO GET INVOLVED?**

War Resisters’ International is a network of independent organisations, with member organisations in more than 35 countries. To get involved in WRI, join one of its affiliates in your country or form a new affiliate, if there is none. Check here for a list of member organisations, if you don’t know whether there is one in your country.

You can also join WRI as an Individual Member, if there is no affiliate in your country or you don’t want to join an existing affiliate for some reason.

This website also has information on

- the current WRI Council;
- WRI activists—office volunteers, staff, and memorials to past activists.

WRI depends on donations to carry out its work. Send a donation to War Resisters' International, to support our work against war and militarism.

You can send your donation by Money Order or by sending a cheque made out in £ Sterling, or by giro transfer to WRI, account no 58 520 4004, sort code 72-00-00, Girobank, Merseyside, Britain.

In some countries, you can send your donation in your own currency to our local financial agent. Contact the WRI office for information.

## TRAINING IN NON-VIOLENCE

### A FULL DOCUMENTATION OF THE WRI STUDY CONFERENCE

This pamphlet is based on the proceedings of the War Resisters' International 1965 Study Conference on Training in Non-Violence held in Perugia, August 13th-20th, with the help of the WRI Section, Movimento Non-violento Per La Pace, Perugia, Italy.

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Areas where non-violence is involved in relation to conflict resolution and training for it**

The War Resisters' International was responsible for the setting up of the World Peace Brigade and later to a great extent for helping to run it. The W.R.I. feels that for developing the instruments for building a world without war, research in and use of non-violent action is highly essential. The World Peace Brigade experience has been valuable in this direction, especially to those who believe that non-violence could be an effective tool for resolving conflict. The World Peace Brigade as a movement has not yet developed into a force capable of influencing situations.

One of the reasons behind this, I think, is the fact that we put too little emphasis on the importance of training a cadre equipped with the necessary tools-skills, attitudes, knowledge etc.

Up to now much of non-violent action was taken under the leadership of personalities such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King who by virtue of their own qualities and self-training were capable of

“leading”. The situation is fast changing. More and more conflicts are coming to the surface. It is neither possible to create leadership of Gandhi’s type, nor, I think, is it worth dreaming of under to-day’s conditions, for the present era is an era of common men and women who can be their own leaders.

It is therefore all the more important that systematic education in the philosophy, history and practice of non-violence is made available to people who wish to be of some service to society by trying to solve social and political, local or international, conflicts in whatever way they can. Systematic training in non-violence seems to be the best way for pacifist and non-violent movements to become more creative and effective. The experience accumulated up till now is sufficient for providing us with active principles for planning and conducting a comprehensive training programme in non-violence. Apart from the field of actual non-violent direct action, there are people in different countries engaged in running training courses, or at least planning such projects, but they are doing this work to some extent in an isolated way or at the most on national level. If non-violence is a universal force and one which does not limit itself within national boundaries, its votaries should get out and join forces with others doing similar work in different parts of the world. For the quality of training in non-violence also it is highly essential that emphasis should be placed on its world character right from the beginning. With this concern in mind the W.R.I. decided to help bring together experts in this field with others interested in the subject who are willing to exchange their experiences and explore the possibility of encouraging new training initiatives.

The initial task before us is not of drawing up a “ blue print “ of a worldwide non-violence training programme. What we should do now is to explore the different training possibilities and make practical suggestions for developing the work during the coming months and years. We should try to investigate how non-violence works in different situations, on different planes and through different media. For instance, we should analyse the ways in which non-violence works in :

- (a) spreading of correct information
- (b) working of enquiry commissions
- (c) discussions and dialogues between opposing groups
  - mediatory and conciliatory efforts by a third party
  - the mere presence of a third party which is neutral
  - protest actions
- (d) civil disobedience and fasts, etc.

There are many different institutions engaged in resolving conflicts between opposing institutions. Although they might not be using non-violence as such as an instrument for conflict resolution there could be a considerable degree of non-violence-or “ un-violence “ if you like- involved in the process. A study of the working of the following institutions in the field of conflict resolution would be of special value: a. local and national governments; b. United Nations and other similar agencies working on governmental plane; c. non-governmental and voluntary organisations; d. trade unions; e. churches and other religious institutions etc.

Study made on the above lines would help us as non-violent direct actionists to coordinate the work of different forces and to find out how we can make use of these forces in the interests of non-violent conflict resolution. Eventually this would be of great value to the non-violent training programme.

While we wish to see fully-fledged non-violent training institutions in every country, we should not ignore the fact that there are already people imparting training in non-violence in their own way and with whatever resources available. There are peace information centres, peace action centres, communities etc. Doing training work on different planes.

An effective network of training activities can be created if only we can coordinate their work. We should try to give guidance to interested individuals and groups towards multiplying the number of such centres and communities, and creating an active link between them. It might be useful to list some of the important training initiatives being taken in different parts of the world.

In the United States the Upland Institute has started functioning from September. Short-term training programmes are often organised by the Committee for Non-Violent Action, the Peacemakers, the American Friends Service Committee, the Civil Rights movement and others. In Canada the Canadian Friends’ Service Committee has been conducting courses in the Training Institute for Non-Violence at Grindstone Island in Ontario.

Apart from seminars and short-term training camps run by the peace movement in there are three training centres as such:

1. Shanti Sena Training Centre at the headquarters of the Sarva Seva Sangh
2. Shanti Sena Training Centre for Women at Indore, and



3. A centre run by Marjorie Sykes in the Nilgiri Hills in South India.

In Great Britain, as a result of a group working on the subject, an Institute has recently been started, in London. Its director is Fred Blum. In terms of regular training there is hardly anything in Great Britain except occasional seminars organised by peace movements.

Evert Huisman is running a centre in Holland. Some time ago I heard of an initiative taken by some peace workers in Sweden. Similarly there is a small group in Denmark which is interested in training, but, as far as I understand, nothing much has been done there. In Belgium Father Piré has started a Peace University at Huy.

There are communities like L'Arc in the South of France, Freundschaftsheim in Germany, Danilo Dolci's centre in Sicily and the C.N.V.A. Farm in New England, U.S.A., which, directly and indirectly, are doing significant work in the field of training in non-violence.

Peace information centres are also important institutions in this regard. The names of the peace centre in Stavanger, Norway, the Peace Action Centre, Frodsham and the Perugia Centre run by Aldo Capitini and Pietro Pinna come to my mind.

Having surveyed the present situation and looking at projects in the offing, we shall naturally need to make practical suggestions regarding international coordination of all these training initiatives and for raising the standard of training.

It is really a question of applying non-violent action in society more widely with a view to minimising the influence of active and dormant violence in the lives of individuals and groups. We have to plan a training programme to equip the peace volunteer with non-violent techniques to help the public in general to express the power of non-violence in its daily life and face conflicts creatively.

### **TRAINING IN NON-VIOLENCE IN INDIA**

Gandhi said in 1936: " Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the cause of fear. Non-violence, on the other hand, has no cause for fear. The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear."

**The Objectives:**

The objectives of training in non-violence:

1. To enable participants to reach a deeper understanding of non-violence;
2. To equip them with skill for individual and mass non-violent action;
3. To train them for democratic leadership in conflict resolution through non-violence; and
4. To help them develop attitudes leading towards non-violence.

For our purpose it might be more useful to work on a broader definition of the concept of training and not limit it merely to the learning of techniques or working out a strategy of action. Training in the context of our work should include not only the “process of education adopted to cultivate attitudes” but proper equipment for skills in action. In a well-denned programme both these aspects coalesce, thus leading to the enrichment of the quality of the individual and his capacity to act.

Non-violence has to concern itself with the change and growth of individual mental attitudes through programmes and techniques of ethical development as well as evolving techniques leading to group functioning and proper interpersonal relationships. This paper thus emphasises that a proper training could be evolved as a blend of both the approaches synthesising development of individual’s inner growth with scientific attitudes, action with understanding.

**Content of Non-Violent Training:**

In order to find out the content of training in non-violence, one must first of all understand non-violence. Non-violence implies:

- (a) A deep sense of compassion and concern for the fellow human being,
- (b) An awareness about the situation,
- (c) A sense of justice and a deep sense of righteous indignation against all injustice,
- (d) A faith that no individual or situation is beyond persuasion,
- (e) Recognition that there can be no permanent change without change of heart and that the sound method of social change is through education, persuasion, negotiations, or if necessary, through self-suffering and Satyagraha,
- (f) A sense of fearlessness and open-mindedness.

---

All these factors combined make active non-violent strength. The training in non-violence has, therefore, to be organised in such a way that it can prepare individuals, groups and communities for such dynamic non-violence.

### **Attitude Training**

Non-violent soldiers will need courage, self-respect, patience, endurance, a sense of unity with one's fellows and the willingness to share with them. They will have to develop a presence of mind to cope with everchanging situations. They must have a sense of humour which will enable them to laugh at themselves. They must be free from inhibitions and prejudice. These and many other virtues have got to be developed by a process of self-training and discipline. As most of our attitudes begin from early childhood, real education for non-violence should begin from a very early age. But even those of us who have passed the age of childhood need not be discouraged! There is hardly any attitude which cannot be changed or acquired by man's conscious efforts and training.

### **Training in Skills and Practical Work**

Training in skills and practical work may include a variety of activities. They will differ according to the circumstances. But they should include the following:

- (a) Activities that will lead one to self-reliance, such as ability to cook, clean, wash, sew, drive, swim, etc.
- (b) Any one activity that will enable one to serve the community with competence, e.g. Medical practice, teaching, helping the invalids, agriculture, mechanical or industrial skills, etc.
- (c) Some creative activity that leads to self-expression and at the same time enables him to reach the hearts of others. Activities such as singing, painting, dramatising, story-telling, cartoon-making, etc.
- (d) Manual work will give the participant an opportunity to develop his skills. Man should try to develop his mind simultaneously with developing his hand.

A detailed list of these activities can be drawn up by the training centres according to their needs and their facilities.

### **Training in Organisation of Non-Violent Action:**

This will include such items as:

1. Investigation;
2. Negotiation;
3. Mobilisation of opinion;
4. Planning;
5. Preparing for action;
6. Exploring legal situation;
7. Developing publicity campaign;
8. Initiating action;
9. Launching the action;
10. Facing retaliation;
11. Nurturing the movement;
12. Keeping morale high;
13. Training in leadership as well as many other aspects of organisation.

But what the trainer in non-violence has to be careful about in dealing with this aspect of the training is to make it absolutely clear to the trainee that non-violence is not a mere tactic, nor is it just a technique. It is a way of life, based on certain fundamental values.

### **Training in the Science of Non-Violence:**

If wars begin in the minds of men, training in non-violence should also try to understand the functioning of the minds of men and change them. An important part of the training in science of non-violence will be study of human psychology. This training should include history of non-violent campaigns, psychological, moral and social reasons for accepting non-violence.

### **Training in Communications:**

In social and political life, problems would be easier to solve provided there was better communication between different parties. The following things will, therefore, be essential in training for non-violence:

- (a) Analysis and categorisation of the problems of barriers to communication;
- (b) Structure, method and processes of communication;
- (c) Media and process for community organisations leadership development;

- (d) Principles and methods of community organisation;
- (e) Depth analysis of conflicts as a barrier to communication; potentiality survey for finding areas of unanimity, consensus and unified action;
- (f) Social action for leadership development and for development of communication

### **Techniques in Training:**

One of the most important techniques of training would be that of community living. Training would be very inadequate without proper emphasis on the climate of the training institutions. When the volunteers get an opportunity of living together, pooling and sharing their experiences they simultaneously get opportunities of solving social problems through non-violent methods in their own small community life.

Other techniques worth mentioning are as follows :

- (a) Providing practice of developing fearlessness,
- (b) Regular classes or lectures,
- (c) Discussions on lectures,
- (d) Group discussions,
- (e) Role play,
- (f) Methods of taking quick decisions; such as "buzz groups", or "phillips 66 "
- (g) Individual prayers or meditation,
- (h) Community prayer

Besides these there are some special experiences in life which may be used for developing proper attitudes for non-violence. For example, we know something of the power of words, but we know very little of the power of silence. Proper conditions should be provided for the volunteers to understand the power of silence. Music stirs emotions deeply, stimulates imagination, helps to solve inner conflicts, enriches consciousness, brings about subtle and profound inner integration of character.

Yet another such experience may be that of working in tune with nature. Some amount of constructive work on the fields, or occasional quiet hours in woods may be of considerable help in developing peaceful attitudes.

How is this to be done? Gandhi has pointed out a way: " How are we to train individuals or communities in this difficult art of non-

violence? There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, thorough cleansing of oneself of all the impurities. If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual forces mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes? For, if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is Ahimsa (non-violence)?

## **PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING**

Non-Violent Training Centre, Netherlands

A training centre in non-violent action has to distinguish between general training and specific training. All volunteers should have both kinds of training; general training first, specific training later. Now let us consider the contents of the training.

### **1. GENERAL TRAINING**

can be divided into three parts: information, meditation, practical exercise.

#### **a. Information**

Obtaining basic knowledge about:

1. Economic, social and political development in industrialised and developing countries.
2. Socio-psychological characteristics of groups.
3. Origin and development of pacinism and non-violent resistance.
4. Historical examples of non-violent actions and their positive and negative results.

#### **b. Meditation**

Meditation will have to be directed especially to the development of the following qualities: self-discipline, group discipline, world approach, self-inquiry, readiness to make sacrifices, perseverance and endurance, self-reliance, group solidarity, helpfulness.

#### **c. Practical exercises**

This concerns strategy, techniques and tactics of non-violent action. We have to consider what kind of non-violent actions there are and



what actions have been taken and where. Most important of all is to consider how to apply them. This can be done best by roleplaying as well as by participating in actions. Much attention has to be paid to this practical part, for during the practice of non-violent action one will be able to test the attainments under (a) and (b).

Briefly:

General training is directed to

1. Understanding of the present-day society with all its conflicts;
2. Understanding both the possibilities and limitation of non-violent actions;
3. Understanding the demands which non-violent action makes on the person using this technique;
4. Means, methods, strategy and techniques of non-violent action in different situations.

## 2. SPECIFIC TRAINING

Specific training can begin only after the general training has been completed. It has to be directed to concrete non-violent actions. Every concrete action has to be preceded by specific training of shorter or longer duration.

Three aspects of specific training:

1. Training related to the objective before the volunteer,
2. Training in the kind of non-violent action which is to be applied,
3. Training in a particular activity of the campaign in which the volunteer will take part.
  1. Every situation is unique. Therefore improvisation is always necessary. Yet it is necessary to understand the situation as well as possible and to be prepared for unexpected moments. Gandhi said that investigation is the first phase of every action. If a volunteer has been assigned for a conflict situation in a foreign country, he has to know something of the country's history, economics and the political situation and has also to know the language to some extent.
  2. During every non-violent action, be it meditation, demonstration, sit-in, fasting or any other action, one has to use the techniques best suited for that particular action.
  3. Every action is team work. There are many kinds of activities connected with every action. Hence distribution of work is

necessary. Every member of the group can play a part according to his aptitudes and capabilities. Training in special activities connected with non-violent actions is necessary because many people do not know their strong points or have not been trained sufficiently in their use. A kind of specialisation is therefore necessary.

In fact two years training is only basic training. Practice is the best teacher and, strictly speaking, training in non-violence lasts as long as one lives.

### TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES

Training in the United States has been connected mainly with specific projects. In the past we have mostly had project-training in connection with Civil Rights and peace movements. Although the top Civil Rights leadership is convinced that there is a great need for non-violent training, it is neglected on the lower level.

There have been a few initiatives in the field of general training in non-violence. The American Friends' Service Committee runs summer institutes. The New York Yearly Meeting conducts week-end schools. The American and Canadian Friends' Service Committees have jointly sponsored a project of training on Grindstone Island.

The training initiatives of the CNVA and the Peace Makers are worth mentioning. They believe in "learning by doing" and use projects as part of training. However, these are short-term training programmes for specific projects and not for general training.

Recently Joan Baez has started an institute for study of non-violence. It cannot, however, be classed as a training institute for it would presumably concentrate on the theoretical study of non-violence. It will have 6-week sessions all the year round and has already started functioning.

An important work done in the field of training in non-violence is the publication of the Manual for Direct Action. It is encouraging to note that 10,000 copies of the handbook have already been sold. It shows that there is great interest in training in the United States. An interesting aspect of training in non-violence in the States is the development of the technique of role-playing. I'll give an example to illustrate how role-playing helps in re-creating real situations and also in finding answers to problems arising therein.

There was to be an "invasion" of Mississippi by 500 people. A two-weeks training programme was organised. In no time the

participants found that the whole exercise would have to be in three parts:

Firstly, it was essential that we should know how Mississippi “operates” –politically, socially and administratively;

Secondly, drawing up a programme for the “ invasion “; and

Thirdly, what techniques and tactics would have to be used. The whole project was dramatised by role-playing.

A fully-fledged Institute for training in non-violence will soon start working. The Institute is one of three schools and a medical centre, operating as constituent parts of the Crozer Foundation, a charitable, religious, scientific, and educational corporation organised for professional training and community service.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE UPLAND INSTITUTE BULLETIN 1965

### History and Purpose

The Upland Institute has been organised to help meet the urgent need for trained leadership required by social welfare, government agencies, social action, peace and civil rights groups. The programme of the Institute rests upon three concepts: 1. social change is inevitable in our complex society, 2. such change can be achieved without reliance upon violence, 3. the intellectual capacities and resources rooted in man’s secular and religious heritage can be utilised in training men and women for leadership in non-violent social change.

The objective of the Institute is to prepare its students to meet the challenge of change in their own communities and in the world community.

Its educational plan offers an experimental approach to training directed to these ends.

The Upland Institute is co-educational and open to students without regard to race or creed. It welcomes men and women willing to work hard and deeply interested in exploring the field of social change and social conflict, with serious intention of giving some time to professional or volunteer service in some area of social change. Since all courses will be presented on a graduate level, a B.A. Degree is desirable but not a requirement for admission. The Institute is prepared to evaluate the education and experience of any applicant, to determine his readiness to undertake the Institute’s intensive course of study and training. Significant experience in some area of social conflict is desirable.

Early experiments in curriculum and field work by the staff of the New York Friends Group have been reviewed and tested with representatives of religious, educational, civil rights, community and peace agencies.

Experimental seminars have been held over a two-year period in New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco.

As a result of this consultation and experimentation, decisions were made to seek a permanent graduate educational setting for the further development of this programme. In December 1964 agreements were reached with the Crozer Foundation at Chester, Pennsylvania, to establish the Upland Institute and open classes in September 1965, using the campus and facilities of the Crozer Theological Seminary, one of a number of constituent institutions operating under the Crozer Foundation.

The Institute is under the immediate direction of a Council of Fellows selected for their experience and competence in areas of social change, academic achievement and interest in the problems of training for conflict management. The Council, in consultation with the staff of the Institute, determines programme, implements policy, sets standards and nominates candidates for the faculty.

### **Programme**

The academic year from September to June will require full-time student participation. Upon satisfactory completion of the programme, each student will be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment. As the programme develops, an MA. Degree may be offered for further work. An intensive study of the history and process of social change will be presented through seminars, individual projects and reading programmes.

Extensive field work experience in areas of social conflict will permit each student to develop skills in his areas of special interest. Enrolment will be limited to fifteen students to provide full opportunity for individual instruction.

### *Areas of Study*

Seminars and courses will be given on such topics as: Structure and Change in Modern Society, a study of the characteristics of contemporary society, the problems inherent to this type of culture and the basic social processes, institutions and mechanisms of social change.

Movements of Social Protest, including the Freedom Movement, peace education and action, trade unionising, etc. This will include a critical evaluation of the problems faced in these areas and the techniques used in attempting to solve these problems.

Organising and Building Programmes for Social Change in the local community with emphasis on the use of both voluntary and governmental organisations, (political parties, labour unions, human relations commissions, health and welfare councils, etc.) as well as methods of organising and conducting non-violent protest movements. This would include emphasis on practical work skills.

The Individual and the Changing Community, an exploration of the importance of personal attitudes, motivations, ethical and religious insights and how these affect the individual's ability to work for constructive social change. Extensive use will be made of case histories. Methods of Action Research, an attempt will be made to develop skills in surveying communities and observing agents of social change. It will emphasise the techniques of reducing biased and distorted understanding.

Concept and Practice of Non-Violence, a consideration of the theory and techniques of non-violent action as a means of effecting constructive social change.

### **Field Work Programme**

Each student will undertake a field work assignment with some social agency or action group actively involved in effecting social change. The student will spend an average of three days a week in field work. There will be opportunities to work with civil rights groups, peace organisations and other social agencies in Chester and in the nearby cities of Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore and Washington. The student is expected to participate fully in the work and programme of the group to which he is assigned. Field work assignments will be guided by the Director of Field Work, who will confer regularly with each student. Participation in regularly scheduled field work seminars and written reports on their field experience will be required.

The objective of the field work programme is to provide first-hand experience in social action; experience in organisational work; to develop particular skills and abilities in organisational work; and to experience the tension inevitably existing between the vision and the reality of any social action movement.

## INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING IN NON-VIOLENCE— GREAT BRITAIN

### **Purpose of the Institute**

The basic purpose of the Institute is to serve as a Centre in the development of a non-violent movement by helping people to become effective “ change agents “ in bringing about a non-violent order.

The training programme aims

- to develop non-violent attitudes towards life and to express these attitudes in action;
- to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of non-violence and of the inter-relationship of different spheres of life in which non-violence may be applied;
- to deal with the inter-cultural and inter-national problems which arise as non-violence is applied to the development of a new order;
- to serve the specific needs of the peace movement and to build bridges between the peace movement and groups concerned with socio- economic change;
- to develop close co-operation with other training centres and foster developments of new centres.

### **Approach to these objectives**

To achieve its objectives the Institute must

- Be down-to-earth by relating all training to the experience of the people;
- Emphasise constructive change in all spheres of life and thus allow non-violence to become central in people’s lives.
- Probe in depth to allow non-violence to become the core and ground of our way of life.
- Overcome the false separation between action, feeling and thought and develop a synthetic approach unifying various dimensions of the whole person.
- Recognise that personal change and social change are inter-related.
- Understand that we are at a decisive turning point in the evolution of human consciousness and that for the first time in history a truly humane order encompassing all mankind is emerging.

### **Programme of the Institute**

A systematic year-round training programme is necessary to implement the objectives and the approach outlined above.



To build up a full programme a preparatory stage is necessary. This stage will begin in October 1965.

The programme to be undertaken during this stage is as follows:

**A.** A programme of lectures, seminars and discussion groups dealing with three themes:

- an assessment of the present and potential use of non-violence in various peace and social action groups;
- an assessment of the actual and potential use of non-violence in various fields of peace and social action such as: resolution of international conflict; the use of peace army or peace brigade; the development of new forms of social organisation, particularly as regards industry and the organisation of work; housing; race relations; education; care of the mentally ill, etc.
- an exploration of new developments in the arts, sciences and in technology and of their significance for the problems with which a non-violent movement is faced.

These lectures, seminars and discussion groups will meet both during the week and during weekends.

**B.** A training programme for the trainers and an experimental training programme for members of peace and social action groups.

This programme will be on a fortnightly basis and meet regularly throughout the academic year.

**C.** A developments seminar during which syllabi for training will be discussed and worked out.

This seminar will also be on a fortnightly basis and meet throughout the academic year.

It is not possible to predict exactly when a full-scale residential programme can be offered. The availability of resource people and of finance will be major factors influencing the time necessary. It is of great importance to proceed step by step and to build up a programme which has been thought through and experimented with thoroughly. A period of about two years is a reasonable period for such a vital process during which the foundation for the future will be elaborated. It should be emphasised that the work proposed to be undertaken during these years will be very substantial. A training manual will be worked out during the preparatory period. This manual should have real value for the development of other training centres.

The full programme will be on a residential basis and will comprise various training programmes lasting from one weekend for special purpose training to a two-year programme for basic training in non-violence.

### INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

The need for international co-ordination of non-violent movements is growing. In any situation in the world, non-violent action can be effective and every non-violent group can both give and receive help. The more active non-violent groups can provide unbiased news as well as expert leadership to the non-violent struggle. There is a need, therefore, to intensify our efforts of co-ordination and to form an International Association for Non-Violence. The independent world-wide organisation of the W.R.I., which has also the necessary experience, seems to me to be bestsuited to form this Association which should not merely be pacifist but also strictly "non-violent".

Co-ordination can be of relevance on the theoretical as well as practical level. With regard to theory we have already achieved a great deal because many books and pamphlets are available. There are study groups within the non-violent action movements as well as at the universities. There is a definite need for greater inter-change of information, for spreading of information and for translation of available material into different languages. It is on the practical level, however, that there is an urgent need for co-ordination because difficult situations arise in existing centres. It is necessary to find ways of spreading detailed accounts of all non-violent action and techniques, methods of training and practical solutions to problems.

How can such co-ordination be brought about? Two ways come to mind. The first is connected with the United Nations. If the United Nations sustains the task of the defence of peace and appropriate intervention in world affairs, it could be interested in creating another organisation on the lines of UNESCO for the establishment and co-ordination of active centres for the propagation of non-violent methods and training. It would be less concerned with the legal aspects than with the distinctly democratic nature of the activity which could exercise a reformative influence on the social structure of each nation. The existence of a net-work of such centres would constitute a powerful force for peace in the world. But the United Nations may regard it as revolutionary because the non-violent ideal can also guide revolutionaries struggling for liberty or justice.' Would the member-governments of United Nations understand the function of these centres

or would they view them as hotbeds for criticism or isolated revolt? If the United Nations does not intend to help in this work of co-ordination, the task could be taken on by the War Resisters' International, which is anyway the nucleus of the International Association for Non-Violence. It is a matter of enlarging the scope of work beyond that of working for conscientious objectors (although they are the pioneers of centres of non-violence) and to embark on the development of positive projects that can be carried out anywhere as "missionary work". The co-ordinating work would be done by means of an information bulletin. A special department of W.R.I. Should be in charge of this work. The funds and publicity available would be meagre as compared with the resources of the United Nations, but this would be compensated by a greater independence from governments.

### **FINDINGS OF THE W.R.I. STUDY CONFERENCE ON TRAINING IN NON-VIOLENCE PERUGIA, ITALY, 13/20 AUGUST, 1965**

The International Conference on Training in Non-Violence, organised by the W.R.I. And held in Perugia, Italy, from 13th-20th August, 1965, discussed the various aspects of a comprehensive training programme including its international co-ordination. The Conference was attended by people who have experience in this field, some of whom are actually engaged in projects and institutes for training in non-violence. The following is an outline of conclusions drawn by the Conference.

#### **PART I. CONTENT OF TRAINING**

##### **1. Recruitment of Trainees**

While faith in non-violence is a basic need, it cannot suffice alone, and training in various forms is necessary. Everyone is eligible to be trained whatever the level of his intellect and ability, though, naturally, some persons will be trained more easily and some will be able to undertake training of a deeper level than others.

The question of who should be trained first is really one of priority governed by the need and the resources we have at our disposal. It would seem that those who want to be trained, and those who need to be because of their future contribution to the work for peace, should be at the top of the list.

It was felt that some persons who are already experienced in non-violent action might need "attracting" to the idea of non-violent training and a different title to the course might be of value in this respect. Recruitment can be made attractive by the kind of publicity and

information sent out, e.g. The publication of a well-written syllabus and prospectus, interesting, well laid-out brochures, and carefully-worded notices in the press and peace periodicals.

## **2. Location of a Training Centre**

Much thought was given to the actual situation of a training centre whether it should be in an area of conflict or not and whether it should be in a city or a country setting. While a conflict area has the advantage of offering trainees personal experience "at their fingertips", it has the disadvantage of having to be moved when the conflict ceases. Likewise a city provides ready-made topical problem situations but tends to foster alienation in the student from other problems outside his "own backyard".

It was felt that a peaceful place for location has its advantages also, in that it is easier for the trainee to get perspective and he can develop a more peaceful style of life; the country, too, is more conducive to meditation and self-realisation. It was suggested that for a general kind of training a peaceful area might be more suitable and to give experience of specific situations the training centre could organise project excursions in conflict areas.

On the other hand, a conflict area might be better suited for specific training for dealing with that particular conflict. On the whole, it was difficult to say which was the best place for a centre because the choice would depend on the circumstances.

## **3. General and Specific Training**

Training itself can be divided into two parts, general and specific. The former might be more attractive for new recruits and may cover a larger area of population (e.g. The new Upland Institute which will serve the whole of the United States of America), while the latter is for limited areas (eg. For those about to conduct a sit-in) and is more likely to be project-centred training drawing recruits into actual projects. Specific training might more easily result in the formation of direct action groups than would general training, which normally participants with a variety of interests would attend.

## **4. Ideology and Training**

Before going on to the methods of training the Conference examined how explicit the values and ideology behind a training programme should be. Two emphases are often heard on this point, the first that non-violence should be practised and out of that practice will grow

the theory. This view holds that it is better to develop ideas out of practical work and trust the creativity which grows out of action than to impose ideology on the programme. The second emphasis recommends stating clearly the goals of a new society, towards which the leaders of the programme are reaching, at the very beginning, and commencing with the orientation of values of that new society. However, a distinction was made between values and ideology. The Conference opposed the introduction of one true ideology but felt it right to state clearly the human values which form the basis of the techniques during training. Although the programme should be clear and explicit from the start on this point and should state its recognition that techniques are not neutral, but have a value dimension, the disadvantage of being so explicit in its promotion is that money will be harder to raise and it may be more difficult to attract the technique-oriented persons who badly need the training for their leadership in social movements.

## 5. Methods of Training

(a) Lectures and discussions are clearly inadequate when the question is how best skills and practical work can be taught. Naturally, the choice of skills to be taught depends on the country, the situation and available materials, but it was agreed that five methods are useful in learning skills:

1. Observation
2. Trying the skill oneself
3. Comparison with the instructor
4. Drill or repetition (3 and 4 continue to alternate)
5. Assessment

(b) The second question to be discussed in this section was "How can organisational aspects best be taught?" and the following suggestions go some way to answering the query;

1. Literature on non-violence should be well studied and the student should become familiar with Gandhi's writings, the booklets "Organising for Non-Violent Direct Action", "A Manual for Direct Action" "Handbook for Shanti Sainiks", and case studies and critical analyses like those of Joan Bondurant.
2. Community living itself could provide a necessary basis for training in organisational matters, and gives examples of the working of the parliamentary or democratic processes in its daily running, yet includes opportunities for mutual and self-criticism.



3. Comparative studies of other organisations, past and present.
4. Although training for organisational aspects of action can be either merely for practice, or real action, it was thought better to train using real action, because the aspects which have been unprepared are in greater evidence in real life. In such projects it is important to share responsibility within the group of trainees, ensuring that everyone has a particular task.

(c) The question arose, in using the case study method, whether it is best to have the group select the cases or to have the teacher do so. Close collaboration is obviously important here, for the teacher has greater experience, but it is better for the group to suggest cases of interest and for the teacher to help systematise their study.

(d) The Conference next considered how the theory of non-violence can best be taught, and concluded that firstly the teacher must motivate the students by preparing the ground in history, philosophy etc. And show the need for non-violence. It is important to see the sources of conflict in the past and how non-violence can help in finding a solution to conflicts, It is necessary to present non-violence not only in application to the most urgent problems, such as The Bomb, but also to every area of life. The important resource materials to be studied in this connection are from Jesus, St. Francis, Tolstoy and Gandhi.

(e) The training of students in communications should include the following points:

1. Emphasis on the power of personal example.
2. Teaching the use of dialogue as a technique of non-violence;; the need to express oneself clearly and learning to pay close attention to the other person's thoughts.
3. Exploration of the power of silence as a means of communication and its ability to unify persons.
4. Learning to understand and appreciate nature, art, music and poetry, which are in themselves powerful means of communication.
5. Role-playing and role-reversal (switching sides in a dispute) in order to learn and understand the other's point of view.
6. Learning to survey the other's views and habits.
7. Helping and serving one with whom one disagrees, which action can lead to a clearer understanding of that person Agreeing that role-playing should have an important part in training, the



---

Conference suggested that it could be useful in the following ways.

8. Working out tactics of action.
9. Discovering problems which were not previously anticipated.
10. Showing where confusion lies in the nature of the aim, if such exists, or revealing where conflicting aims exist in a project.
11. Teaching how to observe closely and objectively.
12. Giving experience to those who have not undertaken much non-violent action.
13. Relieving the tensions which build up before a project, or are inevitable in the process of training.
14. Building trust and confidence between the participants in the action or training programme.

(f) Methods of training should also include provision for manual work. Psychologically, manual work helps the trainee to a. "learn with the whole body " and thus aids the intellect in that it enables him to clear his thoughts; b. develops the feeling of sympathy towards the manual worker and his problems; and c. it acts as a corrective to his becoming merely sentimental about non-violence and peace. From the point of view of social values, manual work is specially needed in areas where it is looked down upon. Its introduction in the training programme would help in creating a sense of the dignity of labour.

(g) Manual labour also helps to train for endurance and is in itself an act of selfdiscipline. Likewise voluntarily keeping silence for long periods, and exposing oneself to extremes of heat and cold, add insight into one's own capacity for endurance and teaches the student to know himself and to extend his capabilities in endurance.

(h) Concrete action which is a part of training should not be chosen by the leader beforehand, but should grow out of the concern of the group.

(i) Large groups cannot be trained but can be instructed. The training centre could help in giving instruction to large groups for specific actions. The centre should concern itself mainly with small groups for actual long-term training.

## **6. Psychological aspects of training**

(a) The Conference agreed that insights into self are stimulated by the learning of skills and one's attitude to the expertise so gained (e.g. If one learns how to use the duplicating machine, one must develop

an attitude of sharing one's skills with others). In this respect the learning of skills must be interrelated with the learning of attitudes.

(b) Regarding the question of whether the trainee has to be a pacifist before commencing the course, it was felt that the criterion of admission should not be faith in non-violence, but an insistence that the student has a passion for social justice and an openness to examine non-violence in all its aspects, and is given training in order to develop a non-violent attitude which goes deep into his own life.

(c) The trainee needs to free himself from fear, hatred and other negative qualities, e.g. Jealousy and ambition. Training in this aspect would include.

#### *1. Freedom from fear*

Doing things involving the object feared and becoming acquainted with it, exposing oneself increasingly to the problem; games, wrestling, role-playing.

Group discussion is also important, for fear is often private, and it is often easier to talk about fear in a group where others also have fears.

#### *2. Freedom from hatred*

Role-reversal, meditation, helping those whom one dislikes when they are in a difficult situation.

#### *3. Development of a non-violent attitude*

Attitude change requires acting, as well as discussing, so even at the most theoretical level training should involve action. There is also an intellectual side to developing a non-violent attitude where intellectual understanding of major issues should help build the non-violent attitude. In attitude change the personal example of the teacher is very important.

However, cautions are necessary here in that it is not wise to talk of "the non-violent attitude" as though one either has it or one hasn't. It is a question of development. Training in attitude should be individualised and involve someone skilled in counselling. What is right for one person may be wrong for another, e.g. To have an attitude of "being composed" might be wrong for one person at a given stage of his development whereas it might be right for another at that time.

#### *4. Self-Restraint*

The counsellor will help the trainee to a healthy self-restraint. Characteristics of healthy self-restraint are that it is a. voluntary, b.

creative and stimulative to more creativity, c. it leads to joy (but the suffering involved in self-restraint should not be perceived by the trainee as the main element, but part of a process which frees him to do more and to rise to a higher level of personal integration-joy being a result of this process), and d. it unites man with man (self-restraint is masochism unless it is a part of relatedness to other people). Learning self-restraint is important because it is voluntary and it allows the development of positive feelings. The unconscious mechanism of repression of aggression only drives aggression underground, and this can be dangerous to both the trainee himself and his work. The trainee must learn the conscious art of suppression of aggression and violence, especially when participating in action projects. This is where the teaching of self-restraint is all-important. Of further importance is the developing of positive feelings, the learning to stop suppression of feelings of affection and goodwill.

7. Following on the discipline of the individual, the question of what kind of discipline is best for the training centre was posed. There are three kinds of discipline:

- (a) Totalitarian-very strict and highly structured
- (b) Democratic-with a moderate amount of structure
- (c) Laissez-faire-with no structure at all and maximum freedom.

It was agreed that for the training centre there needs to be some structure within which there is freedom but which needs to express a sense of "caring" as well, and that the democratic kind of structure would appear to be best suited.

Under this democratic type of structure everyone should participate in making rules and taking other decisions about the training programme and any "rules" which exist should be clear-cut. When someone's behaviour is thought to contravene the basic values on which the training is based the following is apparent:

- (a) the group should re-examine its values
- (b) rule-breaking should not be thought of as "sin" its causes should be traced and sympathetically understood, and in some instances the counsellor may deal with the problem in his sessions with the trainee.

## **PART II: CENTRES FOR NON-VIOLENCE**

The Conference also considered the implications, machinery etc. Of setting up centres for non-violence, for, while it is essential for a

Study Conference on training in non-violence to consider the various aspects of training in a fully-fledged training institute, it is also important to consider in detail questions concerning various organisations through which information and training in non-violence can be imparted to interested people all over the world. This can perhaps best be done by creating information centres, initiating study groups and starting action-study groups.

### **Setting up such Peace Centres**

Three basic and initial problems need to be discussed in this connection:

- (a) Where should such Centres be set up and around whom?
- (b) What would be the programme and equipment?
- (c) How would they be financed?

In answer to a. some possible sites for a Centre could be

- (i) A meeting place run by a friendly organisation
- (ii) A family household
- (iii) A rented shop or office
- (iv) A productive enterprise, such as a factory, farm, newspaper or printing workshop
- (v) A youth club

A suitable location would be a place where there is already some peace activity or other action, which could provide experience in non-violent training. In any situation the Centre would have to build round a person, or group of people, who have the necessary enthusiasm. In some cases the demand for a Centre will come from those people who already have facilities to offer, but in other cases the people initiating the Centre will have to seek out the facilities. If necessary, where land is available, the Centre might have to be built from nothing, possibly with help from an organisation like Service Civil International.

Referring to b., the following is a list of activities, some or all of which the Conference felt a Centre might undertake:

- (i) Publish an information bulletin
- (ii) Provide a local press service, including the writing of letters to Editors etc.
- (iii) Organise meetings, conferences and film shows
- (iv) Arrange programmes for visiting speakers, thus making the fullest possible use of their visit

- 
- (v) Establish library facilities with books and journals, including the sale of journals; and exerting pressure on public libraries to stock books on peace subjects
  - (vi) Organise work camps
  - (vii) Organise training or action, of the type suggested earlier in this report, in co-operation with the Training Institute, with which the centre would be in close touch.
  - (viii) Provide facilities for local peace groups who wish to organise actions

The final question discussed in this connection was how would such Peace Centres be financed. A list of ways in which money could be raised was drawn up. This included direct monetary aid and help in kind, e.g. Help in providing the equipment mentioned above. A distinction, however, was drawn between general fund raising and specific action fund raising. The latter avoids using the general funds of the Centre and enables the donors to share the responsibility for particular projects. General fund raising could, therefore, include :

- (i) Local appeals, fund raising activities, such as concerts, art sales, etc.—“Pennies for Peace” on the lines of Sarvodayo Petra in India.
- (ii) Help from existing peace organisations could be sought. This help should be for setting up a Centre and not for its maintenance, as it is hoped that the Centre would aim at being self-supporting.
- (iii) Commercial activities, e.g. Factory for Peace, Concord Film Council, Endsleigh Cards or a Travel Agency which is attached to a youth organisation and could be a very valuable source of funds.
- (iv) Official sources should be used where possible. Official grants may sometimes be available for particular purposes, such as study grants, but these should only be accepted provided that no conditions are attached to them.
- (v) Part-time work by workers at the Centre would help to take the burden of their upkeep away from the Centre, and would also enable such workers to keep in touch with life in the local community.
- (vi) Possible gifts from wealthy persons.

### **Setting up a Training Institute**

It was felt that similar requirements were necessary to those for setting up of Peace Centres. Before action is taken to set up an Institute certain basic questions should be answered:

1. Can the locality provide for the material needs of the Institute and is there sufficient material for it to work on in the field of social problems, peace activities etc?
2. Is there a group of people within reasonable geographical range to help in the work of training?
3. How will the Institute be received in the locality and how far will the locality be able to use the "qualified" trainees?

The conference suggested that the person taking the initiative should call together a meeting of interested people in the locality to discuss the above questions, and if the project appears to be well founded, then bring in national and international representatives. However, it is strongly recommended that the Institute should have local roots. Once a Training Institute is set up, 12-15 students was felt to be the desirable maximum. Several part-time teachers will be required for their training and probably also 2 full-time tutors, but this depends on the amount of teaching in the field to be undertaken. The Institute itself may not be residential, but if it is, then domestic staff will be required, although it is hoped that students will take part in the actual running of the Institute.

The same kind of financing techniques could be used as mentioned above for Peace Centres, but fund raising could also be organised on a national scale for an Institute. Running costs would include maintenance, probably rent, administrative expenses, costs of meetings and seminars, wages, etc. The question of the wages to be paid has to be left to the individual Institute and the staff concerned, for while the need to pay reasonable wages to tutors in order to attract well-qualified people is obvious, there is also a reluctance on the part of people in the peace movement to accept a standard of living which cuts them off from the people in the community.

### **PART III: INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OF TRAINING WORK**

The importance of coordination between non-violent training centres has grown considerably during the past few years: Individual centres need to communicate with each other in order to share ideas, provide stimulation and more fully integrate their programmes.

To further this communication the Conference recommends to the War Resisters' International that it take initiative to form an International Training Coordination Committee under its auspices, with possible assistance from the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace and the International Peace Bureau.



### **Work of the Committee**

1. The first function of the committee will be to provide a means of information distribution between non-violent training centres. More specifically, this would involve:

- (a) transmitting detailed information of training programmes, activities and general trends to a selected number of training specialists;
- (b) making more general reports on training activities to be used by a wider circle of peace workers;
- (c) producing films on techniques of training and making them available to training centres;
- (d) collecting the above information from regional centres to give a world-wide perspective of non-violent training.

2. The committee will also facilitate the exchange of personnel between individual centres by:

- (a) providing the itineraries of staff of training institutes planning to travel abroad, so that further speaking arrangements may be arranged;
- (b) initiating specific exchanges and general visitation between training centres.

3. Another function of the committee will be to act in an advisory position to the non-violent training centres in:

- (a) setting up new centres;
- (b) promoting high standards for those centres in operation.

4. The Committee will also be responsible for setting up an evaluation programme of the individual centres.

The Conference suggests that the W.R.I. Draw up a detailed list of organisations and people directly related to training in non-violence to be distributed as soon as possible..

## **WOMEN TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES**

### **TIPS ON STARTING A GROUP**

Perhaps you've realised that the demographics of your community are changing and you want to learn more about your new neighbors. Or maybe you have determined that pressing concerns in your community aren't being met by other groups. Have the tragedies of 9/11 or the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq moved you to reach out

internationally to make life better for others? Perhaps you have begun a relationship with a woman quite different from yourself and want to build upon it. We believe a few committed women in your community can do amazing things—WTB has taught us that. If our Chinese sisters are correct in their proverb that “women can hold up half the sky” then only the sky is the limit for what you and a few committed women can do in your community. These tips are not just for women’s groups. Think carefully about your intention, whom you will invite, and the social and cultural dynamics involved. Be sensitive to gender in cultures other than your own. Our experience is with women because we wanted to hear the voices of women independent of the men in their family or community. So if you are interested in forming a vibrant, interfaith group such as WTB, here are some tips from our co-founder Betsy Wiggins:

1. Set a vision for your group We suggest you spend several hours working on the focus for your group. Will it be social, service-oriented or political? Discuss your concept with people in your family, at your place of worship, during community activities, at work. Listen to their concerns. Be open to responses that might widen or narrow your scope. Make notes, get ideas from the people you talk to. Keep track of the development of your idea, since this will help you develop a vision statement.
2. Get help in getting organised Enlist supportive people to help you share your ideas. Inquire who might be interested in your project and ask them if they will help you network. WTB began outside of institutional religious groups but found great support from within them. Remember college students as well as retired people because they will ask you challenging and provocative questions. Ask for their advice, support and further networking opportunities to those they feel would be responsive to your project.
3. Host a meeting Bring together a diverse group of interested people to brainstorm. Try to get a good mix of religions, professions, ethnicities and age groups. If they are responsive to your issues, and choose to engage you in conversation, you will begin to understand the basis of their perspectives. It may cause you to re-evaluate your own perspective and refocus your planning. We found that casual meetings in someone’s home work best at the start. Choose a central location and provide transportation, because it is a barrier for some, including a

---

significant part of your target community that might otherwise not be able to be involved. Invite the people to bring food to share so participants feel they are contributing. Sharing food together at the beginning also helps ease tension and gives people a chance to meet informally before the discussion. But do start that discussion in a timely way, as we find everyone lives busy lives and appreciates timely meetings. Be sure to make introductions as you begin.

4. Keep the discussion moving We found a helpful technique to inhibit the loquacious and encourage the reluctant: use a talking stick. Sometimes it's a feather, other times an artificial flower – anything will do. A woman can only talk when she holds the talking stick. When she's finished she offers it to another person. We found this kept statements short, focused our attention and eliminated people talking over each other. Hearing the thoughts, opinions, and personal stories of others, without the immediate opportunity to share a response, resulted in increased contemplation, new understandings and new questions.
5. Encourage participation Be sensitive to the cultural differences in your group. Early on, we found that many non-native Muslims did not jump in to contribute ideas. This was not their style. They are contemplative, often seeking advice of family before offering their ideas. We learned much from their additions and alternatives shared later. Help participants know how they can share their reflections at a later time.
6. Keep meeting Once you have a group who are committed, and who share your purpose and mission, keep meeting! We tried at first to meet every two weeks but soon found that once a month worked best. We suggest that you gather three to five others to help you in planning. Who are those people you first enlisted? Did you light up a light bulb in their head even if they couldn't meet with your group. Did they say, "You should talk to.., read..., get in touch with this service that would be interested? Are your initial contacts still with you? If so, they should be telling you about good resources. If, not, why not? Are they sympathetic to your vision but too committed with family and work to dedicate time for your project? These are difficult questions, and if you have a group that is dynamic, you will work out these issues to include as many with diverse perspectives as often as you can handle. Don't let excited, vociferous

participants manage your time schedule of meeting time. We suggest you work hard to have top quality meeting topics, speakers and events that will draw people to attend.

7. **Keep communicating** At this formative stage, communication is critical. Keep in touch with those involved and earnestly seek their feedback about what they liked or didn't like about your meetings and ask for their suggestions. With busy schedules, many people who want to stay involved can't attend every meeting. Keep names and phone numbers for those who attend your meetings. Send out impartial meeting notes to all who attended. We found email is much simpler than postal mail. Actively solicit your attendees about what you are doing and goals you should have for your future. Listen and mark well your detractors as well as your champions.
8. **Grow the group** Ask attendees from your first meetings to invite others to your next meeting. We found word of mouth was excellent recruitment, but you might consider advertising in free local weekend supplement to your local paper to try to elicit interest from people you have no other access to. Set up a schedule for two more meeting dates and locations and publicise them well.
9. **Stay focused** Don't let the agenda of other people steer you away from the vision and purpose you have decided upon. For example, a small number of early participants wanted WTB to focus on peace issues. We decided that was a part of our interest, but since another group in town was already very active on peace issues, we referred concerned women to our local Peace Council, which keeps WTB updated about its activities. Revisit your objectives often. Know exactly what you do not want the group to be or do. Don't think your group has to be everything for everybody.
10. **Formalise your organisation slowly** We suggest you devote a lot of energy to strong programmes/events and growing your group before you get weighted down with all the logistics of organisation. Start with a vision statement and short-term goals. Book interesting programmes and develop a vision statement. It took us two years to elect officers and figure out the best organisational scheme for our group. Let the activities and sentiments of the group evolve until you see what type of structure would best serve those needs.

---

## **WTB'S HISTORY**

### **The Beginnings, 2001**

WTB began in September, 2001, with the heartfelt conversation of two women over coffee. Betsy Wiggins had been reflecting on a recent discussion at church about how to discourage discrimination against Muslim women after the 9/11 tragedies. She called the Islamic Society of Central New York asking if Muslim women needed transportation, grocery shopping or other help. That led to an invitation for coffee with Danya Wellmon, who was one of the women leaders at the masjid (mosque).

As Betsy and Danya sipped coffee in the intimacy of the breakfast nook in Betsy's home, a friendship blossomed. Both wanted to continue the conversation and expand it to their friends. Each invited nine women to Betsy's house two weeks later.

The women who attended that get-together in Betsy's home came from Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, and the U.S. They remember the day as a buzz of chatter, a feast of international foods and warm sharing of similar stories and feelings. Few had ever met, yet they felt they had so much in common. Women Transcending Boundaries (WTB) was born!

Awareness of WTB spread by word of mouth as women invited women, and they soon outgrew Betsy's home. The group began meeting monthly, hosted by various places of worship. The first meeting outside Betsy's home was at DeWitt Community Church where the women marveled at the creative embroidery of several women who made Chrismons, cross-stitched ornaments of religious symbols, to hang on a Christmas tree. Later at Congregation Beth Shalom they saw the sacred texts and learned Jewish traditions. And imagine sitting in this Jewish synagogue as you hear a Muslim woman recount her pilgrimage to Mecca for the Hajj! WTB women walked meditatively through a labyrinth at Trinity Episcopal Church during another meeting. That seemed appropriate for WTB because we are all on different paths, but working toward the same goals. The women came to know each other better during this first year. Attendance ranged from eight to 80!

### **FORMALISING AN ORGANISATION, 2002-2003**

During the second year WTB moved meetings to Jowonio School and integrated some small group discussions in the meeting agendas, creating a safe space to share deep concerns. Our educational



programmes covered life cycle events from birth to death, such as marriage rituals and services for the dead. Women from the Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim and atheist traditions talked intimately about what spirituality means to them. Another time the group used a Quaker meeting format to share concerns for local Muslims (after a federal raid on dozens of Muslim homes) and the pending war in Iraq.

In 2002-3 WTB also put its concerns into action and began service projects in literacy by developing training materials in Urdu and raising nearly \$8000 to build a school in Pakistan.

WTB women began gathering outside of the monthly meetings. Several joined the Muslim sisters in the breaking of the Ramadan fast at the Islamic Society. In the summer, WTB hosted a potluck supper for a group of women professionals from Russia.

In the first two years WTB funding came from the donations of WTB women and a \$500 grant from a Muslim women's organisation. A generous person who believes in the cause of WTB (and prefers to remain unnamed) gave the money for this website. In fall, 2003, WTB instituted a modest membership dues (\$10) to help cover some of our operational expenses.

### **DEVELOPING AS AN ORGANISATION, 2003-2005**

A study of *Women Transcending Boundaries* by a Syracuse University graduate student gave us insights about how we need to grow and change. We changed our organisational structure to make it more inclusive and wrote bylaws. We crossed more boundaries to reach out to women from other diverse traditions. We gained international media attention never anticipated. We continued to meet monthly at Jowonio School with programmes designed to both learn more about each other and share about ourselves.

A second International Fundraising Dinner at Temple Society of Concord drew a packed room and we raised more money for IBTIDA (our total is over \$13,000) and for the Literacy Volunteers of Syracuse. Our service projects expanded to more international and local projects to help women, children and disaster victims. Each meeting we welcomed 3-5 new members and the leadership team expanded. In 2005 we began cooking classes where we taught each other our favourite ethnic and family recipes. Several women formed a Book Club and met monthly to discuss a book of interest to the group.

Peace Action gave WTB an award in 2005 for its boundary-crossing work. Co-founders Danya Wellmon and Betsy Wiggins turned over



leadership to Jan Garman, president, and Ann Eppinger Port, vice-president, along with a Council of 13 women who guide the organisation. Betsy and Danya both continued their strong involvement.

### **SUSTAINING OUR GROWTH, 2005-2007**

WTB continued to grow and attract new women from other traditions and cultures. Our monthly meetings averaged 50-60. We attracted new women by word of mouth and our booths at the Plowshares Crafts Festival and the Westcott Fair. We added a woman from the the Baha'i tradition to our leadership team. Programmes included introductions to Janiesm, Sikhism, Baha'i and Native American traditions. We learned about women in Ghana and heard five women share their personal faith stories.

What a fabulous time we had as we packed the room to overflowing for our Third International Dinner in March. And we raised more than \$8200 to help women both in Central New York and around the world. Erica Tavares from Women to Women International touched us with her stories, such as the woman who got aid to buy a goat. She carefully raised it, mated it and sold the offspring so she could buy food for her family and, a luxury — send her daughters to school. Syracuse Chancellor Nancy Cantor complimented us with, "WTB is one of the most impressive grassroots organisations I've ever seen." None of us will forget the image of Madelyn Chadwick with her open umbrella as she urged us to reach out to women in transition living in the home her mother-in-law started, Chadwick House , Syracuse.

WTB served a midwife role in 2006 in helping a teen women of various religious backgrounds begin an organisation similar to WTB. It's called SUN, for supporting, uniting and noticing. The group has been meeting monthly.

2007 saw an increase in a variety of service projects reaching out to refugee women and Syracuse underprivileged children. The leadership of the organisation continued to expand with more women and more diversity. The book club blossomed and by now has read dozens of books about women, faith and social issues.

### **BUILDING THE FUTURE, 2007-2008**

A "Tent of Abraham" walk is a signature event for the 2007-2008 year with women on pilgrimage through various religious institutions in the university area in October. Ann Port steps up as the new chair of the organisation and brings exciting new ideas. Programme topics

range from stories of hope to learning about others' faiths to a cultural day with food and crafts.

In sharing about WTB, Betsy once said, "I thought all I was going to do was have coffee with Danya. I had no idea the women we invited would become a dynamic group. I didn't realise what sort of response our little group would engender. I didn't know we had touched a nerve in the community and that we would become a salon of discussion for many spiritual women with complicated questions."

### **PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY**

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity origins are associated with the Second Vatican Council.

Pope John XXIII wanted the Catholic Church to engage in the contemporary ecumenical movement. He established a "Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity" on 5 June 1960 as one of the preparatory commissions for the Council, and appointed Augustin Cardinal Bea as its first President. The Secretariat invited other Churches and World Communions to send observers to the Council.

The Secretariat prepared and presented a number of documents on:

- ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*)
- non-Christian religions (*Nostra aetate*)
- religious liberty (*Dignitatis humanae*)
- with the doctrinal commission, the dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*).

There are two sections dealing with :

- The Eastern Churches—Orthodox Churches and ancient Oriental Churches, and
- The Western Churches and Ecclesial Communities and for the World Council of Churches.

Following the Council, Pope Paul VI confirmed the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity as a permanent dicastery of the Holy See.

Cardinal Walter Kasper is the current President while Bishop Brian Farrell is its secretary.

In the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988), Pope John Paul II changed the Secretariat into the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU).

## PURPOSE

The Council has a twofold role:

- the promotion in the Catholic Church of an authentic ecumenical spirit according to the conciliar decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*
- to develop dialogue and collaboration with the other Churches and World Communions.

Since its creation, it has also established a cordial cooperation with the World Council of Churches (WCC). Twelve Catholic theologians have been members of the *Faith and Order Commission*.

Similarly, the PCPCU to names Catholic observers at various ecumenical gatherings and in its turn invites observers or “fraternal delegates” of other Churches or ecclesial Communities to major events of the Catholic Church.

At present, the PCPCU is engaged in an international theological dialogue with each of the following Churches and World Communions:

- The Eastern Orthodox Church
- The Coptic Orthodox Church
- The Malankara Orthodox Church
- The Anglican Communion
- The Lutheran World Federation
- The World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- The World Methodist Council
- The Baptist World Alliance
- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Some Pentecostal groups.

The Council also seeks to promote meetings with Evangelicals.

## STRUCTURE

Directed by a Cardinal President, assisted by a Secretary, a Joint Secretary and an Under-Secretary.

## RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

The Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews is distinct from but closely linked with the PCPCU.

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (IARF)

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief,

and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

*Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18)*

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) is to work for freedom of religion and belief because it is a precious human right that potentially enables the best within our religious lives, or our search for truth or enlightenment, to flourish.

It requires work on three aspects, any of which may constitute the core objective for the IARF membership in a country or region:

- Freedom from oppressive interference or discrimination by the state, government or society's institutions on the grounds of religion or belief;
- Mutual understanding, respect and the promotion of harmony, or at least “tolerance”, between communities or individuals of different religions or beliefs;
- An essential accountability by religious communities to ensure that their own practices uphold the fundamental dignity and human rights of their members and others.

Thus, IARF works with and for:

- Groups from different religious traditions or beliefs (normally those which share its values);
- Communities suffering from religious persecution or discrimination.

## **Our Programme Focus**

IARF's International Council has approved a Strategic Plan for 2001-2007 to focus on the following priority activities to advance religious freedom:

1. Supporting Affected Communities: Identifying communities that have recently suffered from the denial of religious freedom and working with regional co-ordinators and member organisations to develop practical programmes of support;

2. Non-Formal Diplomacy: Communicating with decision makers on the basis of non-formal diplomacy, and through U.N. channels, to raise concerns about religious persecution;

3. Young Adult Programmes: Creating a global network of young adults who are committed to addressing religious freedom issues and to promoting interfaith harmony and understanding;

4. Religious Freedom and Responsibility: Working with member organisations to help evolve necessary guidelines for responsible conduct by religious or belief communities;

5. Preventive Strategies: Identifying vulnerable areas before acts of religious intolerance recur, or occur, and developing programmes focused on prevention, including an emphasis on the role of education.

### **The IARF Congress**

Approximately 450-650 individuals from various faith traditions and backgrounds attend the IARF Congress which is held every 3-4 years in a different part of the world. These international convocations involve IARF's membership in interfaith dialogue, discussions about issues facing religious communities, cultural exchanges, and worship. Recent Congresses have been held in Canada, Korea, India, Germany, Japan and Hungary.

### **Links with the U.N.**

The members of the IARF family fully support the principles laid out in the U.N.'s Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) which advocates "freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief." Within the framework of these rights, the Declaration also encourages the concept of responsibility in the field of religion or belief — a cornerstone of IARF's work.

IARF is one of 131 organisations in General Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This status entitles IARF representatives at the U.N. in Geneva to regularly make interventions on behalf of religious minorities. IARF representatives in New York also work closely with many other non-governmental organisations in support of religious freedom.

### **The Global/Local Perspective**

With regional co-ordinators and national chapters, as well as member organisations around the world, IARF is well placed to obtain local perspectives on religious freedom concerns and issues. An International Council of 21 members, representing numerous faith groups, guides the work of the organisation. Meanwhile, the Secretariat plays an international co-ordinating role from the centre of Oxford.

## **Our History**

The IARF, founded in 1900, was one of the first international, inter-religious organisations in the world. While primarily founded by Unitarians and “liberal Christian thinkers” over 100 years ago, the organisation has since grown to include major religious groups of many traditions, including Buddhist, Shinto, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, and Jewish participants. We have over 90 affiliated member groups in approximately 25 countries who share a commitment to religious harmony and freedom of worship. They are all of the conviction that a diversity of religions and beliefs exist which have a positive and constructive contribution to make to human society.

“Religion and belief are motivating forces which guide our existence and make it meaningful. We should listen carefully to the form(s) that the faith and beliefs of others take while accepting our own human limitations to know the truth absolutely. What we can rightly demand is religious freedom, and what we correspondingly must supply are the highest ethical standards of responsible conduct. IARF is a committed fellowship of those who are engaged in both tasks.”

### **Andrew C Clark, General Secretary, IARF**

Andrew Clark with Win Burton, Soul for Europe, and Alison Van Dyk, Temple of Understanding, at Oxford network meeting 2003

### **IARF European and Middle East Coordinator:**

*Rev Ilona Szent-Ivanyi Orbok*  
H-1122 Budapest, Varosmajor u. 13. f.1., Hungary  
Tel: 36-1-225-3235; Fax: 36-1-225-3236  
email: [ilona.orbok@iarf-europe.com](mailto:ilona.orbok@iarf-europe.com)

### **IARF in Southeast Asia:**

*Angelina Grapa*  
Silliman University, Mahogany Cottage, Dumaguete, Negros Oriental—VII, 6200 Philippines  
Tel: 63-35-422-6002, Mobile: 63-919-6998-351,  
Fax: 63-35-422-6002, email: [acgrapa@yahoo.com](mailto:acgrapa@yahoo.com)

### **IARF in South Asia:**

*Zulfikhar Akram*  
84/1, KGN Compound, Near Mamatha School,  
V.V.Nagar, R.T.Nagar Post, Bangalore 560 032 India  
Tel: 91-80-343-2960; Fax: 91-80-343-2960  
email: [iarf@bgl.vsnl.net.in](mailto:iarf@bgl.vsnl.net.in)



**Japanese Liaison Committee:**

*Rev Masamichi Kamiya*  
Rissho Kosei-kai, 2-11-1 Wada, Suginami-ku,  
Tokyo 166-8537, Japan  
tel:81-3-3380-5185, fax:81-3-3381-9792  
email: masamichi.kamiya@kosei-kai.or.jp

**IARF in North America:**

*Rev Richard A Kellaway*  
5 Dover Street #303, New Bedford  
MA 02740 USA  
Tel: 1-508-991-5870, email: <http://www.interfaithstudies.org/network/ishmael@empire.net>

**HUMANITARIAN RESOURCE INSTITUTE****HUMANITARIAN RESOURCE INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL  
PEACE CENTER FOCUSES ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT,  
INTERVENTION AND PEACE NEGOTIATIONS**

The International Peace Center (IPC) is a collaborative initiative to share information and enhance academic discussion of issues related to Crisis Management/Intervention and the prevention and settlement of conflicts between and within states, with emphasis on policy research and development.

In the light of the current escalation of violence in the Middle East, and recent statement from the Israeli army's chief spokesman, invoking Jewish religious teachings as the basis for targeted assassinations points to the significant need for an international refocus on the foundational teachings of the mainstream religions directly involved with the conflicts.

At the center of this discussion is the Golden Rule Principle which is endorsed by all the great world religions and is best interpreted as saying: "Treat others only in ways that you're willing to be treated in the same exact situation." To apply it, you'd imagine yourself in the exact place of the other person on the receiving end of the action. If you act in a given way toward another, and yet are unwilling to be treated that way in the same circumstances, then you violate the rule.

The golden rule, with roots in a wide range of world cultures, is well suited to be a standard to which different cultures could appeal in resolving conflicts. As the world becomes more and more a single

interacting global community, the need for such a common standard is becoming more urgent. (Gensler, Blackwell Dictionary of Business Ethics)

In the light of growing international conflicts, Humanitarian Resource Institute is making an international appeal for religious leaders, government officials and members of negotiating teams to refocus on "The Golden Rule Principle," as the most significant objective for conflict resolution.

The Golden Rule Principle as endorsed by all the great world religions:

*Christianity:* "So in everything, do to others, what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets" — New Testament: MT 7:12 NIV

*Buddhism:* Treat not others in ways that yourself would find hurtful.—Udana-Varga 5.18

*Baha'i:* Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.—Baha'u'llah Gleanings

*Confucianism:* One word which sums up the basis for all good conduct...loving kindness. Do not do to others what you would not want done to yourself.—Confucius Analects 15:23

*Hinduism:* This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.—Mahabharata 5:1517

*Islam:* Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.—The Prophet Mohammed, Hadith

*Judaism:* What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole torah; all the rest is commentary.—Hillel, Talmad, Shabbat 31a

*Native Spirituality:* We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive. — Chief Dan George

*Janism:* One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.—Mahavira, Sutratvanga

*Sikhism:* I am no stranger to no one; an no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.—Guru Granth Sahib, pg.1299

*Taoism:* Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbors loss as your own loss.—T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

*Unitarianism:* We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent of all existence of which we are a part. Unitarian principle

*Zoroastrianism:* Do not unto others what is injurious to yourself.  
— Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29

## **INTERVENTION TEAMS**

Humanitarian Resource Institute is working on the assembly of an intervention team that would be directly involved with peace negotiations, educational initiatives and interfaith discussions to promote the grass roots support of the Golden Rule based objective for international stability.

## **MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

### **INTERFAITH**

Christians always have lived as Christians in a pluralistic world. At the beginning of the 21st century, pluralism has come home. Cities and towns have sizable immigrant communities representing a broad spectrum of the world's religions, as well as locally born neighbors who have converted to, or married into, families of other faiths. Schools and workplaces are increasingly religiously diverse. Global events have created new frictions and fears, as well as new opportunities for interfaith relationships.

As followers of Jesus Christ, Christians are committed to reconciliation among all of God's children, and to building reconciling relationships with people of other faiths, both locally and globally. The resources presented here are designed to help Christians explore how their faith shapes relationships with those of other religions; to learn about the beliefs and practices other faiths; to engage in dialogue, to worship together; and to pray and work for peace together

## **WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an international Christian ecumenical organisation. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, it has a membership of over 340 churches and denominations and those churches and denominations claim about 550 million Christian members throughout more than 120 countries.

The council has been involved in several activities that have caused controversy and criticism, including the funding of groups engaged in violent struggle during the 1970s. The World Council of Churches

describes itself as “deeply involved in efforts for peace in the Holy Land since 1948 when the state of Israel was created”.

## HISTORY

After the initial successes of the Ecumenical Movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 (chaired by future WCC Honorary President John R. Mott), church leaders (in 1937) agreed to establish a World Council of Churches, based on a merger of the *Faith and Order Movement* and *Life and Work Movement* organisations. Its official establishment was deferred with the outbreak of World War II until August 23, 1948. Delegates of 147 churches assembled in Amsterdam to merge the *Faith and Order Movement* and *Life and Work Movement*. Subsequent mergers were with the *International Missionary Council* in 1961 and the *World Council of Christian Education*, with its roots in the 18th century Sunday School movement, in 1971.

WCC member churches include most of the Orthodox Churches; numerous Protestant churches, including the Anglican Communion, some Baptists, many Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed, a broad sampling of united and independent churches, and some Pentecostal churches; and some Old Catholic churches.

The largest Christian body, the Roman Catholic Church, is not a member of the WCC, but has worked closely with the Council for more than three decades and sends observers to all major WCC conferences as well as to its Central Committee meetings and the Assemblies. The Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity also nominates 12 members to the WCC’s *Faith and Order Commission* as full members. While not a member of the WCC, the Roman Catholic Church is a member of some other ecumenical bodies at regional and national levels, for example, the National Council of Churches in Australia and the National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil (CONIC).

Delegates sent from the member churches meet every seven or eight years in an Assembly, which elects a Central Committee that governs between Assemblies. A variety of other committees and commissions answer to the Central Committee and its staff.

These Assemblies have been held since 1948, and last met in Porto Alegre, Brazil in February 2006, under the theme “God, in your grace, transform the world”.

## Previous Assemblies

- Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 22 August–4 September 1948
- Evanston, Illinois, U.S., 15 August–31 August 1954
- New Delhi, India, 19 November–5 December 1961
- Uppsala, Sweden, 4 July–20 July 1968
- Nairobi, Kenya, 23 November–10 December 1975
- Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada 24 July–10 August 1983
- Canberra, Australia, 7 February–21 February 1992
- Harare, Zimbabwe, 3 December–14 December 1998
- Porto Alegre, Brazil, 14 February–23 February 2006

Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania was unanimously elected World Council of Churches President in the 9th general assembly meeting held at the University of Porto Alegre in Brazil in February of 2006. A former president of the WCC was Rev. Martin Niemöller, the famous Lutheran anti-Nazi theologian.

## COMMISSIONS AND TEAMS

There are two complementary approaches to ecumenism: dialogue and action. The *Faith and Order Movement* and *Life and Work Movement* represent these approaches. These approaches are reflected in the work of the WCC in its commissions, these being:

- Commission of the Churches on Diakonia and Development
- Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation
- Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
- Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation
- Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
- Faith and Order Plenary Commission and the Faith and Order Standing Commission
- Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals
- Joint Working Group WCC – Roman Catholic Church (Vatican)
- Reference Group on the Decade to Overcome Violence
- Reference Group on Inter-Religious Relations
- Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC

## Diakonia and Development and International Relations Commissions

The WCC acts through both its member churches and other religious and social organisations to coordinate ecumenical, evangelical, and social action.

Current WCC programmes include a Decade to Overcome Violence, an international campaign to combat AIDS/HIV in Africa and the *Justice, Peace and Creation* initiative.

### **Faith and Order Commission**

WCC's *Faith and Order Commission* has been successful in working toward consensus on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, on the date of Easter, on the nature and purpose of the church (ecclesiology), and on ecumenical hermeneutics.

The 1952 meeting of the Faith and Order Commission, held in Lund, Sweden, produced the Lund Principle for ecumenical co-operation.

The Commission has 120 members, including representation of churches who are not members of the World Council of Churches, among them the Roman Catholic Church. Members are men and women from around the world—pastors, laypersons, academics, church leaders nominated by their church.

*Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (BEM) was published in 1982. It attempted to express the convergences that had been found over the years. It was sent to all member churches and six volumes of responses compiled. As a result, some churches have changed their liturgical practices, and some have entered into discussions, which in turn led to further agreements and steps towards unity.

A major study on the church (ecclesiology) is being undertaken examining the question 'What it means to be a church, or the Church?'

In particular with a focus on ecclesiology and ethics focusing on the churches/Church's 'prophetic witness and its service to those in need'.

Faith and Order is collaborating with *Justice, Peace and Creation* to answer the questions:

- 'How can the search for unity be a source of renewal for both the Church and the world?'
- 'What does our increasing cooperation on issues of justice, peace and the creation teach us about the nature of the Church?'
- 'What is the relationship between ethnicity, nationalism, and church unity?'

Material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is prepared annually with the Roman Catholic Church.



Other work of the Commission includes facilitating the coordination of:

- results from international bilateral dialogues (the Bilateral Forum),
- movements towards local church unions.

#### *Important Texts*

- *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111, the “Lima Text”; 1982)
- *The Nature and Mission of the Church—A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper no. 198; 2005) after *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (Faith and Order Paper no. 181; 1998)
- *Towards a Common Date of Easter*

### **Justice, Peace and Creation Commission**

Justice, Peace and Creation has drawn many elements together with an environmental focus. Its mandate is:

To analyse and reflect on justice, peace and creation *in their interrelatedness*, to promote values and practices that make for a culture of peace, and to work towards a culture of solidarity with young people, women, Indigenous Peoples and racially and ethnically oppressed people.

Focal issues have been *globalization* and the emergence of new social movements (in terms of people *bonding together* in the struggle for justice, peace and the protection of creation).

Attention has been given to issues around:

- economy
- ecology
- Indigenous Peoples
- peace
- people with disabilities
- racism
- women
- youth

### **Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC**

A *Special Commission* was set up by the eighth Harare Assembly in December 1998 to address Orthodox concerns about WCC membership

and the Council's decision-making style, public statements, worship practices and other issues.

The Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC represents the potential for fresh and creative high-level discussion about the structure and life of the Council, a discussion which is explicitly seen as continuing the foundations laid by the process and the policy document "Towards and Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC".

## **CONTROVERSY**

There has been controversy within the WCC about its programmes and actions. Orthodox and Evangelical member churches have sought to make clear the nature of their involvement and limits on the authority of the WCC to speak on their behalf. Many churches have opted to stay out of the WCC, accusing it of being dominated by liberals and (or) leftists. Through the Programme to Combat Racism, the council was involved in several activities that caused controversy and criticism, including the funding for humanitarian purposes of groups engaged in liberation struggles during the 1970s, as in South Africa.

As a member based organisation, the WCC has needed to address the concerns raised by member churches and has done so. The Programme to Combat Racism has been changed and Orthodox concerns have been and are being addressed through the *Special Commission*.

### **Accusations of Anti-Semitism**

The council has been described by some as taking anti-Semitic positions in connection with its criticisms of Israeli policy. They believe the council has focused more on activities and publications criticising Israel than on other human rights issues. The council members have been characterised by Israel's former Justice minister Amnon Rubinstein as anti-Semitic, saying "they just hate Israel."

The World Council of Churches has rejected this accusation. In 2005, the General Secretary of the WCC, Samuel Kobia, stated that anti-Semitism is a "sin against God and man" and "absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith," quoting from the first assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948.

### **Programme to Combat Racism during the 1970s**

There was controversy over the WCC's *Programme to Combat Racism* (PCR) during the 1970s. It funded a number of humanitarian

programmes of liberation movements while those groups were involved in violent struggle, examples include:

- In 1970, *Reader's Digest* suggested that the PCR was contributing to fourteen groups involved in revolutionary guerrilla activities, some of which were Communist in ideology and receiving arms from the Soviet Union (*Reader's Digest*, October 1971).
- In 1977 "The Fraudulent Gospel" by Bernard Smith ISBN 0-89601-007-4 was published in the USA and Britain and carried a graphic photo on the front cover of 27 Black Rhodesians it said were "massacred by WCC-financed terrorists in Eastern Rhodesia in December 1976".
- Donating \$85,000 to the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe (ZANU) in 1978, months after the group shot down an airliner, killing 38 of the 56 passengers on board. Members are reported to have killed 10 survivors (this was denied by the Front)

This caused much controversy in the past among member churches. In a *Time Magazine* article entitled "Going Beyond Charity: Should Christian cash be given to terrorists?" (October 2, 1978). Further examination of WCC's political programme appeared in *Amsterdam to Nairobi—The World Council of Churches and the Third World* by Ernest W. Lefever (1979, Georgetown University, ISBN 0-89633-025-7. Further criticism has also been cited by the Christian right, for example in March 1983 issue of Jerry Falwell related *Fundamentalist Journal*:

There has been an 'enormous disturbance' in British churches, says one Executive Committee member. As for West Germany — which now provides 42 percent of the budget for the financially pressed WCC — official protests are muted, but one top churchman reports 'bitter reaction in our churches.'... In the U.S., important elements in such WCC member groups as the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese are upset.

## SUCCESSSES

Some of the notable successes of the World Council of Churches are in the area of increased understanding and acceptance between Christian groups and denominations. Mutual understanding has developed through the *Faith and Order* related activities; the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* process has been positive.

The WCC has not sought the organic union of different Christian denominations—it has however facilitated dialogue and supported local, national, and regional dialogue and cooperation.

**REGIONAL/NATIONAL COUNCILS**

It should be noted that membership in a regional or national council does not mean that the particular group is also a member of the WCC.

- Africa—All Africa Conference of Churches
- Asia (including Australia and New Zealand)—Christian Conference of Asia, Hong Kong
  - National Council of Churches in Australia
- Caribbean—Caribbean Conference of Churches
- Europe—Conference of European Churches, Geneva, Switzerland
- Latin America—Latin American Council of Churches
- Middle East—Middle East Council of Churches
- North America
  - Canadian Council of Churches
  - National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
- Pacific—Pacific Conference of Churches, Suva, Fiji

**MEMBERS**

- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- American Baptist Churches in the USA
- Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
- Anglican Church of Australia
- Anglican Church of Canada
- Anglican Church of Kenya
- Anglican Church of Korea
- Anglican Church of Tanzania
- Anglican Communion in Japan
- Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil
- Anglican Province for the Southern Cone of America
- Armenian Apostolic Church (Cilicia)
- Armenian Apostolic Church (Echmiadzin)
- Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand
- Baptist Union of Denmark
- Baptist Union of Great Britain
- Baptist Union of Hungary
- Catholic Diocese of Old Catholics in Germany
- Christian Catholic Church of Switzerland

- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA
- Christian Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt
- Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
- Church in Wales
- Church of Bangladesh
- Church of Ceylon
- Church of Christ in Congo
- Church of Christ in Madagascar
- Church of Christ in Thailand
- Church of Cyprus
- Church of England
- Church of Greece
- Church of Ireland
- Church of North India
- Church of Norway
- Church of Scotland
- Church of South India
- Church of Sweden
- Church of the Brethren
- Church of the Confession of Augsburg, of Alsace and Lorraine
- Church of the Province of Southern Africa
- Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean
- Church of the Province of Uganda
- Communion of Baptist Churches in Bangladesh
- Coptic Orthodox Church
- Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
- Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East
- Episcopal Church in the Philippines
- Episcopal Church of Rwanda
- Episcopal Church (USA)
- Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Ethiopian Evangelical Church
- Evangelical Church in Austria
- Evangelical Church in Germany
- Evangelical Church of Cameroon
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

- 
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic
  - Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
  - Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines
  - Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay
  - Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina
  - Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt
  - Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
  - Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy
  - Federation of Protestant Churches of Switzerland
  - Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga
  - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
  - Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
  - Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
  - Iglesia Christiana Biblica
  - Indonesian Christian Church
  - International Council of Community Churches
  - International Evangelical Church
  - Jamaica Baptist Church
  - Korean Christian Church in Japan
  - Lusitanian Church of Portugal
  - Lutheran Church in Hungary
  - Malagasy Lutheran Church
  - Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
  - Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar



- 
- Mennonite Church in Germany
  - Mennonite Church in the Netherlands
  - Methodist Church in Ireland
  - Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
  - Methodist Church Nigeria
  - Methodist Church of Chile
  - Methodist Church of Great Britain
  - Methodist Church of New Zealand
  - Methodist Church of Peru
  - Methodist Church of Sri Lanka
  - Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
  - Moravian Church
  - Myanmar Baptist Convention
  - Old Catholic Church of Austria
  - Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands
  - Old Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland
  - Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania
  - Orthodox Church in America
  - Orthodox Church in Finland
  - Orthodox Church in Japan
  - Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia
  - Polish National Catholic Church in America
  - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada
  - Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
  - Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
  - Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
  - Presbyterian Church of Ghana
  - Presbyterian Church of Korea
  - Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
  - Protestant Church in the Netherlands
  - Reformed Church in America
  - Reformed Church in Hungary
  - Reformed Church in Romania, Cluj
  - Reformed Church in Romania, Oradea
  - Reformed Church in Zambia

- Reformed Church of France
- Religious Society of Friends
- Remonstrant Brotherhood of the Netherlands
- Romanian Orthodox Church
- Russian Orthodox Church
- Salvadorean Lutheran Synod
- Scottish Congregational Church
- Serbian Orthodox Church
- Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic
- Spanish Evangelical Church
- Swiss Evangelical Church Federation
- Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
- The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide
- United Church of Canada
- United Church of Christ
- United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
- United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
- United Evangelical Lutheran Church
- United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India
- United Methodist Church
- United Protestant Church in Belgium
- United Reformed Church
- Uniting Church in Australia
- Waldensian Church
- Waldensian Evangelical Church

### THE WCC

The WCC is a fellowship of churches, now 347 in more than 120 countries in all continents from virtually all christian traditions.

### ECUMENICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIALOGUE AND RELATIONS WITH PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS

#### Taking Stock of 30 Years of Dialogue and Revisiting the 1979 Guidelines

From its beginning, the Church has confessed that God is reconciling the world to Godself through Christ Jesus. Throughout history, the

---

Church has been seeking to understand and apply the fundamentals of its faith to concrete situations in which it found itself. The early Church continuously had to rethink its self-understanding when it moved from being part of the Jewish tradition to becoming a church of Jews and Gentiles, and beyond its Greco-Roman setting into other cultures and regions of the world. Today the church is continually called upon to enable its members to relate to persons of other faith traditions and to live as witnesses with others.

2. True to this vision, the World Council of Churches developed the “Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies” in Chiang Mai in 1979. We affirm the values of these guidelines, which were widely shared and received by the churches. However, we now have thirty years of experience in inter-religious relations and dialogue, making it possible to move forward by drawing on what we have achieved or attempted. Since the 1979 guidelines, the ecumenical movement has taken significant steps toward facilitating inter-religious relations and dialogue, but expectations for the fruits of our efforts have also risen.

3. In recent years, member churches have requested guidelines on inter-religious relations and dialogue that address today’s context. More than ever, we sense a growing need not just for dialogue with people of other faiths but for genuine relationships with them. Increased awareness of religious plurality, the potential role of religion in conflict, and the growing place of religion in public life present urgent challenges that require greater understanding and cooperation among people of diverse faiths.

4. From a global perspective, we speak as Christians of diverse traditions to the member churches. We hope local churches will study, discuss, and adapt these ecumenical considerations to address their own contexts. In this effort, Christians should seek to go further to produce, in collaboration with neighbours of other religious traditions, commonly agreed guidelines for relations and dialogue that would inform, instruct, and enable all to embrace the way of trust and community building.

## **INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS AND DIALOGUE TODAY**

5. Greater awareness of religious plurality has heightened the need for improved relations and dialogue among people of different faiths. Increased mobility, large-scale movement of refugees, and economic migrations have resulted in more people of diverse faiths living side-by-side. Where mechanisms for dialogue and encounter exist, there are

opportunities to foster greater knowledge and awareness among people of different religions. Unfortunately, increased relations between communities have sometimes been marred by tension and fear. For many communities, this tension confirms the need to protect their individual identities and distinctiveness. Sometimes the difference between the legitimate search for identity and hostility towards neighbours of other religions and cultures is blurred. Throughout the world and among the followers of major religious traditions, there has been a rise in influence of movements and leaders mobilising their believers in the name of preserving a perceived threatened distinctive identity. Often such an understanding of identity is made into the exclusive basis for the creation of a new societal order, shaped by a selective retrieval of doctrines, beliefs and practises from a sacralized past.

6. Whenever religious plurality gives rise to communal tensions there is a possibility of religious sentiments being misused. Religion speaks for some of the deepest feelings and sensitivities of individuals and communities; it carries profound historical memories and often appeals to uncritical confessional solidarities. Religion is sometimes seen as the cause of conflict, while it is in fact more likely to be an intensifier of conflict. Inter-religious relations and dialogue are meant to help free religion from such misuse, and to present opportunities for religious people to serve together as agents of healing and reconciliation.

7. Too often religious identities are drawn into conflict and violence. In some parts of the world, religion is increasingly identified with ethnicity, giving religious overtones to ethnic conflict. In other situations, religious identity becomes so closely related to power that the communities without power, or who are discriminated against, look to their religion as the force of mobilization of their dissent and protest. These conflicts tend to appear as, or are represented to be, conflict between religious communities, polarising them along communal lines. Religious communities often inherit deep divisions, hatreds and enmities that are, in most cases, passed down through generations of conflict. When communities identify themselves or are identified exclusively by their religion, the situation becomes explosive, even able to tear apart communities that have lived in peace for centuries. It is the task of inter-religious relations and dialogue to help prevent religion from becoming the fault line between communities.

8. Efforts to prevent polarization between religious communities at the world level are more important than ever. Through media,

people tend to perceive conflict in one place as part of a conflict in another causing enmities in one part of the world to spill over into other regions. An act of violence in one place is used to confirm the stereotype of the “enemy” in another place, or even to provoke revenge attacks elsewhere in the world. There is a need therefore to de-globalise situations of conflict and to analyse each one within its own context. The emphasis on the specificity of every context should not prevent people of faith in other parts of the world from being both concerned and involved. An inter-religious engagement in one place may in fact be an essential contribution to peace building and reconciliation in another place.

9. There is in many countries a growing role of religion in public life that requires greater understanding and cooperation among religions. Religious leaders are being called by governmental and non-governmental agencies to address public issues of moral concern. However to speak collectively and with moral authority, religious communities must discern their common values, decide to what extent they can express themselves with one voice, and discuss how they can avoid being manipulated by political forces.

### **APPROACHING RELIGIOUS PLURALITY**

10. In their encounters with neighbours of other religious traditions, many Christians have come to experience the meaning of a “common humanity” before God. This experience is rooted in the biblical affirmation that God is the creator and sustainer of *all* creation. “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it” (Ps.24.1). God called the people of Israel to be witnesses among the nations while, at the same time, affirming that God is the God of all nations (Ex.19: 5-6). The eschatological visions in the Bible anticipate all nations coming together and the creation being restored to the fullness that God intends for all. This conviction is reflected in the affirmation that God is not without witness among any people or at any time (Acts 14.17).

11. When relating to people of other faiths, Christians must be aware of the ambiguities of religious expressions. While religious traditions reflect wisdom, love, compassion, and saintly lives, they are not immune to folly, wickedness and sin. Religious traditions and institutions sometimes support, or function as, systems of oppression and exclusion. Any adequate assessment of religious traditions must deal with their failure to live in accordance with their highest ideals.

Christians are particularly aware that history testifies that our own religious tradition has sometimes been used to distort the very meaning of the gospel we are called to proclaim.

12. As witnesses, we approach inter-religious relations and dialogue in commitment to our faith. At the heart of Christian belief is faith in the triune God. We affirm that God, the Father, is creator and sustainer of all creation. We hold the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the centre of God's redeeming work for us and for the world. The Holy Spirit confirms us in this faith, renewing our lives and leading us into all truth.

13. We are convinced that we have been called to witness in the world to God's healing and reconciling work in Christ. We do this humbly acknowledging that we are not fully aware of the ways in which God's redeeming work will be brought to its completion. We now see only dimly, as in a mirror, for we now know only in part and do not have the full knowledge of what God has in store (cf. 1 Cor. 13.12-13).

14. Many Christians have found it difficult to make sense of, or relate creatively to, the reality of other religious traditions. However, as Christians we believe that the Spirit of God is at work in ways beyond our understanding (cf. John 3. 8). The activity of the Spirit is beyond our definitions, descriptions and limitations. We should seek to discern the Spirit's presence where there is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5. 22-23). The Spirit of God is groaning with our spirit. The Spirit is at work to bring about the redemption of the whole created order (Rom. 8. 18-27).

15. We are witnesses in a world where God has not been absent and to people who do have something to say about God. We meet people who already live by faiths that rule their lives and with which they are at home. We witness among them in a spirit and spirituality informed by our Christian faith. Christians need to open themselves to the witness of others, which is made not just in words but also in faithful deeds, in devotion to God, in selfless service and in commitment to love and non-violence.

16. Our witness is marked by repentance, humility, integrity and hope. We know how easily we misconstrue God's revelation in Jesus Christ, betraying it in our actions and posturing as owners of God's truth rather than as undeserving recipients of grace. The spirituality,



dedication, compassion and wisdom we see in others leave us little room for claiming moral superiority. Awaiting the freedom God wills for all creation (Rom. 8. 19-21), we cannot but make known to others our own experience and witness and at the same time listen to them expressing their deepest convictions and insights.

17. In dialogue and relationships with people of other faiths, we have come to recognise that the mystery of God's salvation is not exhausted by our theological affirmations.

*Salvation belongs to God.* We therefore dare not stand in judgement of others. While witnessing to our own faith, we seek to understand the ways in which God intends to bring God's purposes to their fulfilment.

*Salvation belongs to God.* We therefore feel able to assure our partners in dialogue that we are sincere and open in our wish to walk together towards the fullness of truth.

*Salvation belongs to God.* We therefore claim this hope with confidence, always prepared to give reason for it, as we struggle and work together with others in a world torn apart by rivalries and wars, social disparities and economic injustices.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

18. Dialogue must be a process of mutual empowerment, not a negotiation between parties who have conflicting interests and claims. Rather than being bound by the constraints of power relations, partners in dialogue should be empowered to join in a common pursuit of justice, peace and constructive action for the good of all people.

19. In dialogue we grow in faith. For Christians, involvement in dialogue produces constant reappraisal of our understanding of the Biblical and theological tradition. Dialogue drives all communities to self-criticism and to re-thinking the ways in which they have interpreted their faith traditions. Dialogue brings about change in the experience of faith, helping people to deepen and grow in their faith in unexpected ways.

20. In dialogue we affirm hope. In the midst of the many divisions, conflicts and violence there is hope that it is possible to create a human community that lives in justice and peace. Dialogue is not an end in itself. It is a means of building bridges of respect and understanding. It is a joyful affirmation of life for all.

21. In dialogue we nurture relations. Building bonds of relationship with those considered "the other" is the goal of all dialogues. Such

bonds however are not built easily or quickly. Therefore patience and perseverance are crucial in the practice of dialogue. The tenacity to go on, even when the fruits are not obvious, is one of the basic disciplines of dialogue.

22. In dialogue we must be informed by the context. Dialogue takes place in concrete settings. Awareness of such realities as historical experience, economic background and political ideologies is essential. Further, differences in culture, gender, generation, race, and ethnicity also have an important impact on the nature and style of interaction. The purpose of dialogue, once the context is taken seriously, is not to remove or run away from differences but to build confidence and trust across them.

23. In dialogue we strive towards mutual respect. Dialogue partners are responsible for hearing and listening to the self-understanding of each other's faith. Trust and confidence comes from allowing partners to define themselves, refraining from proselytism, and providing an opportunity for mutual questioning, and if appropriate justified criticism. Such practices promote an informed understanding of each other, which becomes the basis for all other relationships.

24. In dialogue it is important to respect the integrity of religious traditions in the variety of their structures and organisations. Equally important is to recognise the way that participants in dialogue define their relation with their community. Some affirm their right and obligation to speak for their community. Others would choose to speak from their own experience.

25. Dialogue is a co-operative and collaborative activity. All partners involved need to be included in the planning process from the very beginning. The strength of setting the agenda together lies in the fact that all partners own the agenda and become committed to making it work. For the conduct of dialogue clear objectives and commonly agreed criteria for participation and regular assessment are essential.

26. In dialogue we strive to be inclusive, since dialogue can easily become an elitist activity and be confined to certain strata of society. Care should be taken to ensure that dialogue takes place at different levels, between different groups and on subjects that affect the lives of all sections of the community.

### **SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

27. Individuals and communities may, even with the best of intentions, encounter problems and difficulties in inter-religious

---

relations and dialogue. Sometimes the call for dialogue is met with hesitation, suspicion, indifference or opposition both from within one's own community and from other religious communities. Sometimes inter-religious relations communicate attitudes that contrast with the values upheld by the culture and ethics of dialogue. Sometimes the possible outcome of dialogue does not seem enough to really justify participation. In addition, other problems invite careful consideration, some of them emerging in recent discussions.

28. There are often expectations that dialogue can significantly contribute towards resolving political or communal conflicts and restoring peace, in situations where religion seems to be implicated. In a number of countries there are dialogue partners who are able to cooperate, across the religious divide, in concrete efforts of peace making. There are also cases where religious leaders are invited to play a visible role in state-sponsored peace initiatives. The impact of dialogue in the context of conflicts may disappoint high expectations. When it is unable to quell conflict, its relevance is questioned. However, by its very nature, inter-religious dialogue is not an instrument to instantly resolve problems in emergency situations. Contacts and relations of precious trust and friendship between people of different religions, built quietly by patient dialogue during peacetime, may in times of conflict prevent religion from being used as a weapon. In many cases, such relations may pave the way for mediation and reconciliation initiatives. At times of communal tension or at the peak of a crisis, contacts across the communal divide may prove to be invaluable in the construction of peace.

29. Although dialogue by its very nature is direct encounter, there are invisible participants on each side in every dialogue. Our dialogue partners will every so often hold us responsible for what fellow Christians have done or neglected to do, said or not said. While this in some ways is inevitable and even sometimes understandable, we are well aware of deep disagreements within religions and we know that the dividing lines do not always go between religious communities but often within religious communities. The differences may be not only theological, but relate to social, political, and moral issues. We may for various reasons find ourselves in opposition to some of those with whom we share a common faith. We learn that religious communities are not monolithic blocks confronting each other. Plurality of positions on each side should not be ignored or suppressed while defending what is perceived to be the interest of one's community. Commitment to a faith does not entail identification with what is

done or not done in its name. Therefore, we should not be defensive, but remain confident of the potential of dialogue to changing deeply held opinions or prejudices.

30. Among many religious communities, we come across people who seem to be primarily interested in the growth of their own community through various forms of mission including proselytism. They seem to have little interest in dialogue or may make use of it to further their missionary design. Such situations can be discouraging for people willing to engage in dialogue. Their disappointment often overshadows the possibility of identifying partners critical of those attitudes in their community. It is essential that we intentionally seek such partners and explore ways of rebuilding the credibility of dialogue enabling people of divergent positions to enter a relationship of mutual respect and openness in discussing divisive issues.

31. There are several expressions of dialogue, reflecting the various aspects of life itself. There is not one expression better than the other and our engagement therein should not conform to any pre-set model or hierarchy of dialogue but respond to the need, doing what is possible. In some contexts, we may discuss "cultural" differences more readily than "religious" ones, even as issues of religious concern and practice are considered in such a discussion. Similarly, co-operation about "social" concerns may be possible and even strongly supported, where there is hesitancy to consider dialogue on theological issues.

32. Motivations for dialogue can sometimes be conditioned by power relations between religious communities and by the importance, objective and subjective, of numerical disparities. In many countries, these communities share the same language and often the same culture. Often their members are said to be granted by law equal civil and political rights. But discriminatory practices exacerbate distrust and division. The intermingling of state policies and confessional identities rooted in communal traditions may lead communities to look at each other as a threat. This is particularly true in times of uncertainty or political and constitutional changes involving a redefinition of state-religion relationships. Inter-religious dialogue cannot shy away from recognising the effects of uneven power relations and the impact of mutual perceptions, no matter how distorted they are. The relevance of dialogue initiatives depends largely on their intentional and concentrated effort to dispel fears and suspicions between those who are seen to represent religious communities. Equally, it is essential that inter-religious dialogue creates an opportunity for strengthening

---

cross-confessional loyalties, always upholding, in discussion and joint action, the centrality of the common good and inclusive political participation.

33. Participation in multireligious prayer has become increasingly common among a large number of Christians. Concrete situations of everyday life provide opportunities for encounter with people of different religions. These include inter-religious marriages, personal friendship, praying together for a common purpose, for peace or in a particular crisis situation. But the occasion can also be a national holiday, a religious festival, a school assembly, and other gatherings in the context of inter-religious relations and dialogue. There are various forms of prayer among people of different religions. Christians may be invited to other places of worship, where they should be respectful of the practices of that tradition. Christians may invite guests of another religion to a church service and should ensure a welcoming hospitality. Multi-religious prayer juxtaposes the prayer of different traditions. The advantage is that the variety and integrity of each tradition is honoured and that we are praying in the presence of each other. The disadvantage may be that one remains a bystander. United inter-religious prayer is an occasion where people of different religions plan, prepare and participate together in a common prayer. There are those who feel that this risks reducing prayer to the lowest common denominator and that it can take away from the unique spirituality of prayer of each religion. For others such prayer is not at all possible. Yet for some, praying together could be a spiritually enriching occasion. All these different responses indicate that serene conversations among Christians on this issue are not a finished task.

## **CONCLUSION**

34. In the many pluralist societies where they live, Christians and people of other religions are bound together in a dialogue of life, with all its difficulties but also its riches and promises. They gain new insights about their own faith and that of others. They discover afresh resources, which will help them become more humane and make the world a better place for living together. They learn how to be more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of others and more obedient to God's will for all creation.

## **WHAT IS THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)?**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organised expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity.



The WCC brings together 347 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 560 million Christians and including most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of denominations from such historic traditions of the Protestant Reformation as Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed, as well as many united and independent churches. While the bulk of the WCC's founding churches were European and North American, today most are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific.

For its member churches, the WCC is a unique space: one in which they can reflect, speak, act, worship and work together, challenge and support each other, share and debate with each other. As members of this fellowship, WCC member churches:

- are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship;
- promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism;
- engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation; and
- foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.

## **THE WCC AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**

The modern ecumenical movement began in the late 19th and early 20th century, when Christians began to pray and work together across denominational boundaries. By the close of the 1920s, several pioneering movements had been formed to advance the cause of church unity worldwide.

In 1937, church leaders agreed to establish a World Council of Churches, but its official organisation was deferred by the outbreak of the second world war until August 1948, when representatives of 147 churches assembled in Amsterdam to constitute the WCC.

Since then, a growing number of churches on every continent has joined in this search for Christian unity. They have built new bridges over ancient chasms separating believers from one another.

WCC member churches today include nearly all the world's Orthodox churches, scores of denominations from such historic traditions of the Protestant Reformation as Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed, and a broad representation of united and independent churches.



---

The world's largest Christian body, the Roman Catholic Church, is not a member of the WCC, but has worked closely with the Council for more than four decades and sends representatives to all major WCC conferences as well as to its Central Committee meetings and the assemblies. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity appoints 12 representatives to the WCC's Faith and Order Commission and cooperates with the WCC to prepare resource materials for local congregations and parishes to use during the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The goal of the World Council of Churches is not to build a global "super-church", nor to standardise styles of worship, but rather to deepen the fellowship of Christian churches and communities so they may see in one another authentic expressions of the "one holy, catholic and apostolic church". This becomes the basis for joining in a common confession of the apostolic faith, cooperating in mission and human service endeavours and, where possible, sharing in the sacraments. All these acts of fellowship bear testimony to the foundational declaration of the WCC that the Lord Jesus Christ is "God and Saviour according to the Scriptures".

The ecumenical movement encourages cooperation and sharing, and common witness and action by churches. It seeks to renew the church through activities and networks among clergy and lay people, especially women and youth. It seeks visible unity, not as an end in itself, but to give credible witness "so that the world may believe", and to serve the healing of the human community and the wholeness of God's entire creation.

While it shares in other forms of international, intercultural and inter-religious cooperation and dialogue, the ecumenical movement is rooted in the life of the Christian churches. And while it has worldwide scope (oikoumene means "the whole inhabited earth"), it is particularly interested in the true being and life of the church as an inclusive community, in each place and in all places.

### **What are some of the ecumenical movement's major achievements?**

- New councils of churches and other ecumenical bodies in different countries and regions have created a genuinely worldwide ecumenical network of which the WCC is an integral part. The creation of this network has inspired its members to share an extraordinary number of resources of all kinds—theological, liturgical, spiritual, material and human.

- The Roman Catholic Church is a full member of many national ecumenical and several regional ecumenical organisations and has a regular working relationship with the WCC.
- Shared convictions on faith, life and witness are increasingly enriching theological reflection undertaken from strictly confessional perspectives. For example, theologians from different church traditions working together in the WCC's Faith and Order Commission produced a statement on baptism, eucharist and ministry that has led to new worship patterns within churches, and to a greater understanding and changed relationships between churches of different confessional traditions.
- During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians are drawn together into the prayer of our Lord that all may be one so that the world may believe. This Week, whose theme is developed each year by the Faith and Order Commission with the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, draws churches at the local level into deeper fellowship.
- Since its creation, the WCC has supported and inspired church participation in struggles for justice, peace and creation. One example is the highly-valued support given by the churches, through the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism, to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Support to efforts to bring about an end to the two decades-long civil conflict in Sudan, or to reunification of North and South Korea, or to the defence of human rights in Latin America during the decades of brutal military dictatorships in that region are three among many other examples.
- Recognition of the importance of inter-religious dialogue and relations with other faiths, as well as of the churches' responsibility for the integrity of creation, have been particular hallmarks of the ecumenical movement.

Today, both the ecumenical movement and the WCC are changing. New forms of ecumenical commitment are emerging; young people are finding their own expressions (and thus assuming ownership of) ecumenism and church; amidst the multiplicity of ecumenical bodies, the WCC is redirecting its energies to doing what it does best and is uniquely equipped to do.

The WCC shares the legacy of the one ecumenical movement and the responsibility to keep it alive. As the most comprehensive body among the many organised expressions of the ecumenical movement,

---

the Council's role is to address global ecumenical issues and act as a trustee for the inner coherence of the movement.

## WCC HISTORY

The historical roots of the World Council of Churches are found in student and lay movements of the 19th century, the 1910 Edinburgh world missionary conference, and a 1920 encyclical from the (Orthodox) Synod of Constantinople suggesting a "fellowship of churches" similar to the League of Nations. Leaders representing more than 100 churches voted in 1937-38 to found a World Council of Churches, but its inauguration was delayed following the outbreak of the second world war.

Predecessor bodies that have been incorporated in the Council over the decades include international conferences on "faith and order" (theology, sacraments, ordinances) and "life and work" (social ministries, international affairs, relief services), the International Missionary Council (IMC), a world alliance of churches for global peace as well as a council descended from the 19th-century Sunday school movement.

Two pioneering WCC projects were launched in co-operation with the IMC in 1946: the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA), and the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland. Today the Ecumenical Institute offers master's and doctoral degrees in ecumenical studies through the theological faculty of the University of Geneva.

After the war, the Council encouraged churches' development ministries and continues this work among refugees, migrants and the poor. During the cold war, the WCC provided a forum for East-West dialogue. In 1961 the IMC was merged with the WCC, giving the Council an enlarged agenda in world mission and evangelism. The Programme to Combat Racism, although controversial, assisted in ending apartheid in southern Africa. A landmark document, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (1982) provided some theological consensus among churches in the quest for full Christian unity.

When the WCC came into being at the First Assembly in 1948, there were 147 member churches. Today the membership stands at 347 churches. Predominately Protestant and Western in its earliest years, the WCC's profile and identity evolved during the 1960s with the influx of many Orthodox churches from the East and newly autonomous churches from formerly colonial regions in the South. The Second Vatican Council greatly improved relations between the WCC and Roman Catholics.

The WCC holds its assemblies every six to eight years. The First Assembly took place at Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1948, and the Ninth Assembly was convened at Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006. An elected central committee guides the WCC between assemblies.

### **FIRST ASSEMBLY, AMSTERDAM 1948**

It was on the 23rd of August 1948, in Amsterdam, that the World Council of Churches was officially founded. 147 churches from different confessions and many countries came together to commit themselves to the ecumenical movement.

At the assembly in Amsterdam, four sections were organised to examine aspects of the theme “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design”:

- the universal church in God’s design
- the church’s witness to God’s design
- the church and the disorder of society
- the church and the international disorder.

### **Second Assembly, Evanston 1954**

The only WCC assembly to date held in the United States, it to some degree reflected—and certainly reflected on the East-West tensions of the cold war. The Assembly divided its work into six sections:

- Our oneness in Christ and our disunity as churches
- The mission of the church to those outside her life
- The responsible society in a world perspective
- Christians in the struggle for world community
- The churches amid racial and ethnic tension
- The laity: the Christian in his vocation.

### **Third Assembly, New Delhi 1961**

Best remembered for the incorporation of the International Missionary Council into the WCC, and the admission of 23 new member churches, including significant sectors of Eastern Orthodoxy and churches from newly independent nations, the Assembly focused on the theme “Jesus Christ—the Light of the World” with three sections on witness, service and unity.

### **Fourth Assembly, Uppsala 1968**

The assembly at Uppsala bore further testimony to the expanding membership of the Council, as well as the fresh breezes of Vatican II that brought Catholic observers to participate in the meeting and discuss

further opportunities for cooperation. Sections were organised under the headings:

- The Holy Spirit and the catholicity of the church
- Renewal in mission
- World economic and social development
- Towards justice and peace in international affairs
- Worship
- Towards new styles of living.

#### **Fifth assembly, Nairobi 1975**

*“Jesus Christ frees and unites”* the delegates sang in the midst of Nairobi’s life: people from around the earth, standing before God in their captivities and disunities and naming a divine possibility.

The assembly section titles echo concerns of that turbulent decade:

- Confessing Christ today
- What unity requires
- Seeking community
- Education for liberation and community
- Structures of injustice and struggles for liberation
- Human development.

#### **Sixth assembly, Vancouver 1983**

At this assembly on the western shores of Canada, a renewed emphasis on common worship was experienced under the great white tent standing beneath the summer sun. Hope for closer fellowship arose from dialogue on the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) document, and such ecumenical experiments as the Lima Liturgy. At the same time, the nuclear threat and neo-colonialism glowered like dark clouds on the horizon. The Assembly proclaimed its theme: *“Jesus Christ – the Life of the World”*, and carried out its work in the following issue groups:

- Witnessing in a divided world
- Taking steps towards unity
- Moving towards participation
- Healing and sharing life in community
- Confronting threats to peace and survival
- Struggling for justice and human dignity
- Learning in community
- Communicating credibly.

**Seventh assembly, Canberra 1991**

1991 was the first time a theme had explicitly invoked the third person of the Trinity, and it did so in the context of the physical universe. Sections were organised under four sub-themes:

- “Giver of life – sustain your creation!”
- “Spirit of truth – set us free!”
- “Spirit of unity – reconcile your people!”
- “Holy Spirit – transform

**Eighth assembly, Harare 1998**

Half a century after the official foundation of the WCC, its member churches renewed their commitment to stay together, and delegates promised to remain in solidarity with their African hosts.

The Assembly decided to set up a commission on the participation of the Orthodox churches in the WCC. It backed the creation of a “Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations” which could extend the ecumenical outreach far beyond WCC member churches.

Delegates and assembly visitors participated in more than 600 contributions to a three-day “Padare” in which subjects ranged from Evangelical-Orthodox dialogue to human sexuality. It was preceded by a Decade Festival of churches in solidarity with women.

**Ninth assembly, Porto Alegre 2006**

The 2006 assembly was one of the most representative gatherings of Christians ever held—with over 4,000 participants from ecumenical organisations and groups, delegates from 348 member churches, observers and visitors from all around the world.

Addressing the core issues of Christian unity, the Assembly agreed on a new text, “Called to be the One Church,” and urged that WCC and its member churches give priority to the questions of unity, catholicity, baptism and prayer. Other key issues discussed at plenary sessions were Economic justice, Christian identity and religious plurality, and Youth overcoming violence.

Also, delegates adopted a substantially revised Constitution and Rules which moved the WCC to decision-making based on consensus and which amended membership criteria. Steps were taken to strengthen active involvement of youth (under 30 years) in the life and work of the Council.



**WILLEM A. VISSER 'T HOOFT (1948-1966)**

A brilliant and visionary Christian leader from the Netherlands, Willem Visser 't Hooft was named WCC general secretary at the 1938 meeting where the WCC was first formed. He fulfilled this function until his retirement in 1966. A major concern for him was linking the ecumenical movement to enduring manifestations of the church through the ages. In 1968, the WCC 4th Assembly elected him honorary president of the WCC.

**Eugene Carson Blake (1966-1972)**

Eugene Carson Blake served as WCC general secretary from 1966-1972. Previously, the talented administrator and ecumenical leader had served as stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA and as president of the National Council of Churches in the USA. An ardent advocate of the civil rights movement, he helped launch the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism.

**Philip A. Potter (1972-1984)**

Philip A. Potter, a Methodist pastor, missionary and youth leader from Dominica in the West Indies served as WCC general secretary from 1972-1984. A forceful speaker and leader of Bible studies, he insisted on the fundamental unity of Christian witness and Christian service and the correlation of faith and action.

**Emilio Castro (1985-1992)**

Emilio Castro, a Methodist pastor and theologian from Uruguay who had previously served as director of the WCC commission on World Mission and Evangelism, was the WCC general secretary from 1985-1992. He achieved prominence among Protestant leaders in Latin America by virtue of his eloquent preaching and progressive views on Christianity and the social order.

**Konrad Raiser (1993-2003)**

The Lutheran theologian Konrad Raiser was WCC general secretary from 1993-2003. He once described his ecumenical calling as a "second conversion". During a sometimes turbulent period for the ecumenical movement, he led the Council in a redefinition of its Common Understanding and Vision and in a fundamental review of the participation of Orthodox member churches.

**Samuel Kobia (since 2004)**

Samuel Kobia, an ordained minister of the Methodist Church in Kenya, took up office as WCC general secretary in January 2004.

Following his election, he called on the churches to “work tirelessly towards the healing of the world and the restoration of human dignity.”

Bearing in mind its central task as a council of churches calling one another to visible unity, the WCC builds on the initiatives of churches and partner organisations; keeps in tension dialogue and advocacy, building relationships and promoting social witness; and offers a prophetic voice and witness on the urgent and turbulent issues of our times.

In February 2006, the WCC’s 9th assembly formulated the Council’s programme priorities for the period ahead. So, over the next seven years, the WCC will be working within the framework of six new programmes, each of which builds on past work in these areas, and includes several time-bound, projects and activities.

The six programmes are:

### **The WCC and the Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century**

This programme will focus on

- nurturing ecumenical relationships – among member churches and with ecumenical partners;
- interpreting and communicating the ecumenical vision, and facilitating theological analysis of 21st-century ecumenical challenges; and
- ensuring the coherence of the whole ecumenical movement.

### **Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality**

This programme will encourage churches to

- call one another to visible unity, examine and develop agreed positions on issues that divide them, and overcome exclusion and discrimination in church and society;
- work together for more faithful mission in the world, studying how to hold commitment to unity together with mission and evangelism;
- explore traditional and newer dimensions of ecumenical spirituality, thus deepening the spiritual dimensions of their lives.

The Council’s Faith and Order, and World Mission and Evangelism Commissions guide and enable its work on unity, mission, evangelism and spirituality. Both are composed of concerned and knowledgeable people from member and non-member churches, who provide links to networks engaged on these issues.

### **Public Witness: Addressing Power, Affirming Peace**

In relation to churches' concerns on violence, war, human rights, economic injustice, poverty, and exclusion, this programme will address power and affirm peace by

- voicing these concerns at the UN and at other inter-governmental bodies;
- accompanying churches in critical situations and offering a prophetic witness: in the Middle East in particular, and against violence (via the Decade to Overcome Violence);
- bringing churches together to reflect on and study these issues.

The Commission of the Churches in International Affairs (CCIA) comprises 38 people nominated by churches and regional ecumenical organisations to advise the WCC in international affairs.

### **Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation**

This programme will support churches' efforts to meet human need, combat injustice, and threats to creation. In particular, it will help support and strengthen churches'

- organisational capacities, and accountability between donors and recipients of resources;
- work with uprooted people;
- work on health and healing, with particular emphasis on HIV and mental health;
- work on climate change, water, energy, nuclear concerns, and the use/misuse of new technologies.

### **Education and Ecumenical Formation**

This programme will both support efforts in the field of ecumenical and faith formation, as well as (at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey) provide formation. In supporting the churches' education/formation work it will

- create educational practitioners' networks;
- identify training/education needs and offer scholarships;
- develop and share curricula;
- maintain an ecumenical library and archives.

### **Inter-Religious Dialogue and Cooperation**

In order to help promote respectful coexistence and peaceful integration in pluralistic societies, this programme will

- enable bilateral and multilateral dialogues, regional and cross-cultural encounters on topics like perceptions of “the other”; religion and violence; etc.
- engage churches in reflection on what it means to be Christian in a world of many religions;
- in countries where religion is being used to fuel conflict, equip churches for inter-religious advocacy.

In its work over the coming period, the WCC will attempt to focus on what, as a global fellowship of churches, it is uniquely qualified to do. An effort to “do less to do it well” will demand collaboration between the programmes on particular projects.

The visible unity of the church is the central goal of the ecumenical movement. And while “visible unity” can be understood in various ways, it necessarily involves *relationships* between churches.

Churches and other ecumenical partners pray, reflect, plan and act together. As a fellowship of some 350 Anglican, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Old Catholic, Protestant, independent and united churches, nurturing such relationships is a vital facet of the WCC’s vocation to support the churches and the ecumenical movement in their efforts to reach visible unity.

Thus, this programme will encourage relationships with and among its member churches, but also with churches which are not members, Christian world communions, conciliar bodies and other ecumenical agencies; it will support ecumenical initiatives at regional, national and local levels and, in general, seek to promote the coherence of the one ecumenical movement.

## Projects

*Ecumenical vision of the WCC:* This project interprets and communicates a vision, embodied in the WCC’s 1998 policy statement “Towards a common understanding and vision of the WCC”, that seeks both to broaden the ecumenical movement and to serve it.

*Global platform for theology and analysis:* This project offers a global platform for theological analysis of 21st century ecumenical challenges and their implications for church and ecumenical vision, activities and structures.

*Relationships with member churches:* This project provides a space in which member churches can explore and experience what being in fellowship means, and seeks to maximise their participation in its governing bodies and ongoing programmatic work.

---

*Partnership with ecumenical organisations:* This project seeks to develop partnerships with and among international and regional ecumenical organisations, national councils of churches, specialised ministries, Christian world communions, and coordinate relationships with non-member churches such as the Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and evangelical churches.

*Youth in the ecumenical movement:* This project promotes the active participation of young adults in the life of churches and the ecumenical movement, helping them to network, and enabling them to express their concerns and visions.

*Women in church and society:* This project offers women from different Christian traditions, regions and age groups an opportunity to speak out and share their visions so that they might contribute to society, the ecumenical movement and the search for unity.

## **INTERPRETATION OF THE ECUMENICAL VISION OF THE WCC**

With this project, the WCC invites churches to continue their reflection on the future of ecumenism as well as on their own ecumenical engagement. It builds on a major 1990s study on the “Common understanding and vision of the WCC (CUV)” which revealed that while the ecumenical movement is wider than the WCC’s organisational expressions, the council serves as a prominent instrument and expression of this movement.

Stimulated by the CUV study and document, reflection on ecumenism has pursued various avenues over the past decade. For example, a Special Commission examined Orthodox participation in the WCC; a change from parliamentary to consensus decision-making procedures was one direct outcome of this four-year effort, that ended in 2002. The potential of consensus decision-making as a new institutional culture for ecumenical engagement can be further strengthened and shared with other ecumenical partners.

Pursuing another avenue of reflection, consultations on “Ecumenism in the 21st century” focused on the “reconfiguration” of the ecumenical movement. A 2004 meeting on this topic suggested ways to strengthen and systematise relationships between ecumenical partners. The project follows up this avenue, and may translate it into constitutional changes at the WCC’s 10th assembly in 2013.

The creation of a Global Christian Forum was yet another effort to stimulate thinking about the reconfiguration of the ecumenical



movement. It created an open space where representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organisations could explore common challenges. In 2006, the WCC's 9th Assembly approved the Forum's recommendations, and encouraged it to continue.

The CUV document itself continues to provide resources for the ongoing development of ecumenism. For example, the WCC claims to be a "fellowship of churches", but this is sometimes challenged from a spiritual perspective. "Praying together" has become an ecclesiological and spiritual challenge, and the CUV has much to say on this subject.

This project – interpretation of the ecumenical vision of the WCC – thus includes the continuation of the "Ecumenism in the 21st century" process, more work on the consensus decision-making method, and a Global Forum Event in November 2007. It involves communication, ecumenical formation and study. It works through ecumenical officers, youth, member churches and other ecumenical bodies to promote common reflection on developments in the ecumenical movement.

The formation of the WCC did not answer a number of fundamental questions about the nature of the Council and its relationship to the member churches. That task was left to the WCC's central committee at its meeting in 1950, with the following result.

Towards a common understanding and vision of the World Council of Churches: A policy statement adopted by the WCC central committee and commended to member churches and ecumenical partners for study and action in September 1997.

Final statement from the consultation "Ecumenism in the 21st century": Christians face new challenges in the world and new and effective ways of working together are required in order to respond to the demands of the world from the perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A WCC consultation on "Ecumenism in the 21st Century" was held in Switzerland in 2004 to reflect on this question.

Out of reflection on the "Common understanding and vision of the WCC (CUV) came a proposal to explore the potential of a forum that would reflect a broader pattern of relationships than the fellowship of WCC member churches.

Background document on reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement: International relationships, governance, economic power, communication, and the role of religion in society have changed dramatically since the WCC and many ecumenical organisations were



established. The relevance and the need for a reflection on the re-configuration of the ecumenical movement have been discussed and studied in the WCC for several years.

A diverse group of people – theologians, church leaders, social scientists, ecumenists and others – came together in November 2003 at the invitation of the WCC to reflect on the reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement. The meeting was enriched by the participation of young people who earlier in the week had met separately to discuss the same issue.

### **GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR THEOLOGY AND ANALYSIS**

The WCC as a world-wide instrument of Christian unity facilitates common theological understanding on crucial issues in the life, work and relationships of, and among, churches, Christian World Communions, ecumenical partners and specialised ministries working in different fields. The WCC has done this in various ways in the past. It now plans to provide a global platform involving church leaders, theologians, ethicists, social scientists and activists from many parts of the world.

The platform will provide a space to analyse and interpret major challenges to the Christian witness of the churches, their ministries and the ecumenical movement in the world today. The aim is *to allow dialogue and a sharing of diverse perspectives rather than to arrive at convergence texts*.

After a consultative process in 2007 to identify the issues for study and reflection, the consultative group will work through e-mail, conference calls and meetings organised with other regional and global consultations. A special effort will be made to ensure substantial youth participation in the process. In the longer term, the issues discussed and the results of those discussions will be widely communicated and followed up in the programmatic work of the Council and of the broader ecumenical movement.

#### **Discussion Platform**

An interactive online forum where the documents of the platform will be shared, and participants' comments will be collected and published.

#### **WCC**

The WCC encourages churches to call one another to visible unity, work together for more faithful mission in the world, and deepen the

spiritual dimensions of their lives. Recognising that these areas are interrelated, it attempts to do this in an integrated way.

In addressing unity, mission, evangelism and spirituality, this programme will work, among others, through the WCC Faith and Order Commission, the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), and an Ecumenical Disabilities Advocates Network (EDAN). These bodies provide links to a vast network of member and non-member churches and organisations active in these areas.

### **Projects**

#### *Called to be the one church*

This project examines issues – theological, historical and social – that continue to divide the churches, and develops agreed positions on these issues (building on a “Called to be the one church” text adopted by the WCC’s 9th Assembly in February 2006)

#### *Spirituality and worship*

This project encourages churches to explore traditional and newer dimensions of ecumenical spiritual life, continue work on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and collect resources for worship and healing in community.

#### *Mission and unity*

This project is launching—in preparation for the centennial of the 1910 Edinburgh world mission conference, and in order to sharpen ecumenical understanding and practice of mission—an international study on holding commitment to unity together with mission and evangelism.

#### *Just and inclusive communities*

In relation to the unity and mission of the church, this project challenges churches to confront and overcome exclusion of and discrimination against people with disabilities, indigenous and racially oppressed peoples, ethnic minorities and Dalits, and to build just and inclusive communities.

### **SPIRITUALITY AND WORSHIP IN ECUMENICAL CONTEXT**

Worship—including sacramental life, prayer and Bible study—is integral to the life of the churches and the search for unity. This project encourages traditional and newer expressions of spirituality in the churches and explores how these relate to their search for unity.

It develops and gathers materials for worship, and encourages theological reflection on the significance of worship and spiritual life in ecumenical contexts, building on earlier WCC and ecumenical work in these areas.

Tools for analysis and reflection include consultations and use of the Internet to collect and share information on worship and spiritual life practices. Professional expertise in the fields of worship, spiritual life and communication are enlisted to produce materials that are accessible to the churches.

This project also takes advantage of opportunities for common worship and common prayer with member churches and ecumenical partners (while bearing in mind the recommendations from the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC).

Relationships with renewal communities and with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity ensure sensitivity in dealing with treasured texts, symbols and practices from a wide variety of Christian traditions.

Joint (with the RCC) preparation of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity materials focuses on creative ways of using them at a local church level. Plans are being made for celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Week of Prayer in 2008.

### **IN GOD'S HANDS: THE ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE**

At the very heart of the ecumenical movement is the reality of prayer. Jesus prayed that we may all be one, united in God in the mystery of the Trinity. That is the basis and the goal of our search for unity.

The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle enables us to journey in prayer through every region of the world and through every week of the year affirming our solidarity with Christians all over the world, brothers and sisters living in diverse situations, experiencing diverse problems and sharing diverse gifts. Lord, hear our prayer...

These pages are based on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle "In God's Hands—Common Prayer for the World". The book and the website offer valuable aids for *intercessory prayers*, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

<i>Week #</i>	<i>Countries—Dates in 2007</i>
<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Territories including Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, 31 December 2006-6 January</i>

---

Week 2	<i>Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, 7-13 January</i>
Week 3	<i>Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, 14-20 January</i>
Week 4	<i>Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, 21-27 January</i>
Week 5	<i>Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, 28 January—3 February</i>
Week 6	<i>Ireland, United Kingdom, 4-10 February</i>
Week 7	<i>Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, 11-17 February</i>
Week 8	<i>Portugal, Spain, Italy, Malta, 18-24 February</i>
Week 9	<i>Germany, France, 25 February—3 March</i>
Week 10	<i>Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, 4-10 March</i>
Week 11	<i>Myanmar, Thailand, 11-17 March</i>
Week 12	<i>Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, 18-24 March</i>
Week 13	<i>China, Hong Kong, Macao, 25-31 March</i>
Week 14	<i>Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, 1-7 April</i>
Week 15	<i>East Timor, Indonesia, Philippines, 8-14 April</i>
Week 16	<i>Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, 15-21 April</i>
Week 17	<i>Djibouti, Somalia, 22-28 April</i>
Week 18	<i>Eritrea, Ethiopia, 29 April—5 May</i>
Week 19	<i>Sudan, Uganda, 6-12 May</i>
Week 20	<i>Kenya, Tanzania, 13-19 May</i>
Week 21	<i>Malawi, Zambia, 20-26 May</i>
Week 22	<i>Botswana, Zimbabwe, 27 May—2 June</i>
Week 23	<i>Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, 3-9 June</i>
Week 24	<i>Angola, Mozambique, 10-16 June</i>
Week 25	<i>Brazil 17-23 June</i>
Week 26	<i>Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, 24-30 June</i>
Week 27	<i>Bolivia, Chile, Peru, 1-7 July</i>
Week 28	<i>Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, 8-14 July</i>
Week 29	<i>Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, 15-21 July</i>
Week 30	<i>Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, 22-28 July</i>
Week 31	<i>The Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and</i>

---

	<i>Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, 29 July—4 August</i>
Week 32	<i>Canada, USA, 5-11 August</i>
Week 33	<i>Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, 12-18 August</i>
Week 34	<i>The Pacific islands: Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and the French Overseas Territories of New Caledonia (Kanaky) and French Polynesia (Tahiti), 19-25 August</i>
Week 35	<i>Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, 26 August—1 September</i>
Week 36	<i>Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, 2-8 September</i>
Week 37	<i>Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 9-15 September</i>
Week 38	<i>Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, 16-22 September</i>
Week 39	<i>Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, 23-29 September</i>
Week 40	<i>Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, 30 September-6 October</i>
Week 41	<i>Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, 7-13 October</i>
Week 42	<i>Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, 14-20 October</i>
Week 43	<i>India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, 21-27 October</i>
Week 44	<i>The Indian Ocean islands: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives, 28 October—3 November</i>
Week 45	<i>Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, 4-10 November</i>
Week 46	<i>Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, 11-17 November</i>
Week 47	<i>Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea 18-24 November</i>
Week 48	<i>Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, 25 November—1 December</i>
Week 49	<i>Liberia, Sierra Leone, 2-3 December</i>
Week 50	<i>Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, 9-15 December</i>
Week 51	<i>Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, 16-22 December</i>
Week 52	<i>Ghana, Nigeria, 23-29 December</i>



**LETTER TO HIS ALL HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW I,  
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH**

Your All Holiness,

At this time of Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the world, we greet you in the name of him who says, "In the world you face persecution. But take courage: I have overcome the world" (John 16.33).

On behalf of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, we write to express our profound sorrow at the reports we are receiving of new pressures and difficulties being brought upon the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We are pained to read of the public criticisms and attacks being made upon yourself and upon the Christian community in Turkey. Such hostility must be very hard to bear, with the added sense of isolation that it brings. Our own visits to you in Istanbul in April and May this year vividly reminded us of the need to sustain with you the reality of our fellowship in Christ: "When one member suffers, all suffer together with it."

We wish Your All Holiness, and all our brothers and sisters under your leadership throughout the world, to know of our solidarity with you in thought and prayer at this difficult time. The days in the immediate future are, we realise, beset with many sensitivities in the political sphere especially as regards the question of the accession of Turkey to the European Union. This makes it even more important, we believe, that your own patient and determined advocacy of the accession of Turkey to the EU should be recognised and reaffirmed by all who have at heart the future of Turkey, and the peaceful development of Europe and the wider world. For those of us who have long known you, this is but one more example of the integrity you have shown as a leader in the worldwide Orthodox Church and in the ecumenical movement where you have unceasingly proclaimed the cause of dialogue, reconciliation and peace in the world at large no less than the calling to Christian unity. There are many throughout the world who deeply appreciate your most recent emphasis on this, in your message recorded for the first International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September this year.

Whatever may be outcomes of the forthcoming political negotiations on 17 December, we in the WCC and CEC will follow the process with the greatest attention, and will seek to accompany the Ecumenical Patriarchate in reflection upon our common Christian responsibility



---

for the future of Europe. Meanwhile, if it would prove helpful we shall be very glad if a representative each of WCC and CEC could visit the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the next few days, both as a further token of our solidarity with you and in order to gain further information on your situation and to receive your insights on the issues before us.

Please accept then, Your All Holiness, the assurances of our earnest prayers for God's sustaining grace and guidance in the coming days, and our hopes for the strengthening of our common endeavours for peace and reconciliation

## **GUIDELINES ON DIALOGUE WITH PEOPLE OF LIVING FAITHS AND IDEOLOGIES**

### **INTRODUCTION: DIALOGUE IN COMMUNITY**

Why the theme "Dialogue in Community"? As Christians live together with their neighbours of other faiths and ideological persuasions the emphasis has come to be placed not so much on dialogue itself as on dialogue in community. The Christian community within the human community has a common heritage and a distinctive message to share; it needs therefore to reflect upon the nature of the community Christians seek together with others and upon the relation of dialogue to the life of the churches, as they ask themselves how they can be communities of service and witness without diluting their faith or compromising their commitment to the Triune God. Such an enquiry needs to be informed both by a knowledge of different religions and ideologies and by insights gained through actual dialogues with their neighbours. The enquiry needs also to take into account the concerns, questions and experiences of the member churches of the WCC.

The Central Committee which met at Addis Ababa (1971) recognised that "the engagement of the World Council in dialogue is to be understood as a common adventure of the churches". The World Council of Churches comprises various confessional heritages and a wide variety of convictions. The plurality of cultural situations as well as the varieties of religions, cultures, ideologies, political structures and social backgrounds which Christians bring to their common life together play a significant role in the discussions. Political attitudes and economic forces influence the power relationships between communities. In an age of worldwide struggle of humankind for survival and liberation, religions and ideologies have their important contributions to make, which can only be worked out in mutual dialogue.

It is a responsibility of Christians to foster such dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation and hope granted to us by Jesus Christ. It is easy to discuss religions and even ideologies as though they existed in some realm of calm quite separate from the sharp divisions, conflicts and sufferings of humankind. Religions and ideologies often contribute to the disruption of communities and the suffering of those whose community life is broken. Therefore the statements made here on the relationship between Christian communities and communities of their neighbours should be read with a recognition that they have a place in the total WCC programme which includes major Christian involvement in political and economic stresses and social problems as well as in issues raised by science and technology for the future of humankind. Further, they should also be evaluated in relation to other WCC concerns and in their bearing in such discussions as the unity of the church and the unity (community) of humankind.

It will be noted that the statement and the guidelines touch religions more than ideologies. This is a conscious self-limitation because so far the sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI) has more experience of actual dialogues with people of living faiths than of ideologies. However, this does not mean that the dialogue programme is not concerned with ideologies. It is part of its mandate, recognising that religions and ideologies interact and influence each other in the life of the community. The manner in which ideological factors affect religious structures and attitudes has been considered in some of the consultations. Ideological questions touch many parts of the World Council's work. Christian-Marxist meetings were part of the programme of Church and Society for several years. In many countries Christians live and work together with neighbours who hold very definite ideological convictions. In its various programmes on science and technology, the search for a just, participatory and sustainable society, international affairs, development etc., the issues raised by ideologies play an important role. Therefore where reference to ideologies is made in the statement and guidelines, it is recognised that continuing work in this area cannot be done by the DFI alone but has to be done in cooperation with other sub-units, and drawing on the previous experiences of the World Council as a whole in this matter.

The words "mission" and "evangelism" are not often used in this statement. This is not because of any desire to escape the Christian responsibility, re-emphasised in the Nairobi Assembly, to confess Christ

today, but in order to explore other ways of making plain the intentions of Christian witness and service. Christian integrity includes an integrity of response to the call of the risen Christ to be witnesses to Him in all the world.

## **PART I: ON COMMUNITY**

### **A. Communities and the community of humankind**

1. Christians begin their reflection on community from the acknowledgement that God as they believe Him to have come in Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things and of all humankind; that from the beginning He willed relationship with Himself and between all that He has brought to life; that to that end He has enabled the formation of communities, judges them and renews them. When Christians confess Him as one Holy Trinity, when they rejoice in His new creation in the resurrection of Christ, they perceive and experience new dimensions of the given humanity which God has given. Yet, the very nature and content of our Christian confession draws Christians to pay the closest attention to the realities of the world as it has developed under God's creative, disciplinary and redemptive rule. So they are led to attempt a description of communities and the community of humankind in the light of a basic Christian confession but in terms which may also find understanding and even agreement among many of other faiths and ideologies.

2. Men and women are all born into relationships with other people. Most immediately there are the members of their families, but quickly they have to explore wider relationships as they go to school or begin work. This may take place in the complexity of relationships within a village society, or within the modern urban centres of town and city which attract ever larger populations. They experience still wider associations within nation, race, religion, and at the same time they may belong to different social classes or castes which condition their ideological outlooks. Then the newspapers they read, the radio and T.V. programmes they hear and see give them an awareness of the multitude of ways in which the lives they live are dependent on people in other parts of the world, where ways of life are amazingly varied. From these, and many related contexts, they derive their sense of being part of some communities and apart from others. The sense of identity with some communities and of alienation from others is something never completely understood but it remains reality for us all at the many levels of our existence.

3. Within each particular community to which people may belong they are held together with others by the values they share in common. At the deepest level these have to do with their identity, which gives them a sense of being "at home" in the groups to which they belong. Identity may be formed with a long historical experience, or in the face of problems newly encountered; it may express itself in communal traditions and rituals shaped through centuries, or in newer forms sometimes less coherent and sometimes more rigid. Religions and ideologies have formative influence on communities; but religions and ideologies have themselves been shaped by other elements of the culture of which they are part—language, ethnic loyalty, social strata, caste. Some communities may tend to uniformity in this regard, while others have long traditions of pluralism, and it is not infrequent that individual families may share more than one set of beliefs.

4. Human communities are many and varied. They are involved in a constant process of change which evokes their comparison with flowing rivers rather than stable monuments. But if change is always present, there can be no doubt that it has been accelerated in the present times, especially by scientific technology, economic forces and the mass media. Some changes are so rapid and dramatic as to give the experience of the loss of community and of the human isolation which follows. In other instances communities are structured and reshaped: once closed communities being thrown into relationship with others with which they find themselves engaged in the task of nation building; communities formerly of a single cultural identity being opened to a cultural pluralism and plurality of religious systems; communities in which traditional religious systems may undergo far-reaching change, and, revitalised, provide renewed identity and continuity with the past. Amidst these changes many people are alienated from all community and have either given up the quest for community or are seeking it from many sources.

5. An important aspect of this accelerated change has been brought about by the complex network of relationships which has been created between human communities in recent times. More urgently today than ever in the past, the traditions of our individual communities are being drawn towards one another, sometimes into a new harmony, sometimes into a destructive whirlpool in the flowing rivers. The inter-relatedness of human communities brings with it many new challenges to mutual concern and pastoral care, the response to which, both individually and collectively as communities, will determine the character of the reality of "the community of humankind".

---

6. The response is often given in the form of ideologies. In fact the accelerated change has made people more sensitively aware of the need for conscious social and political action, because they find themselves in the midst of many ideological projects which attempt in various ways to shape or reshape society. Traditional communities do not escape the impact of ideological thinking and action and their varied responses may bring conflict as well as renewal.

7. There are dangers inherent in this situation, but experience of human inter-relatedness in different local situations deepens awareness of the richness of the diversity of the community of humankind which Christians believe to be created and sustained by God in His love for all people. They marvel and give thanks for this richness, acknowledging that to have experienced it has given many of them an enriched appreciation of the deeper values in their own traditions and in some cases has enabled them to rediscover them. But at the same time they feel sharply conscious of the way in which diversity can be, and too often has been, abused: the temptation to regard one's own community as the best; to attribute to one's own religious and cultural identity an absolute authority; the temptation to exclude from it, and to isolate it from others. In such temptations Christians recognise that they are liable to spurn and despoil the riches which God has, with such generosity, invested in His human creation... that they are liable to impoverish, divide and despoil.

8. Because of the divisive role to which all religions and ideologies are so easily prone, they are each called to look upon themselves anew, so as to contribute from their resources to the good of the community of humankind in its wholeness. Thinking of the challenge to the Christian faith Christians are reminded both of the danger of saying "peace, peace" where there is no peace and of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Happy are those who work for peace: God will call them His children." (Matt. 5. 9). As workers for peace, liberation, and justice, the way to which often makes conflict necessary and reconciliation costly, they feel themselves called to share with others in the community of humankind in search for new experiences in the evolution of communities, where people may affirm their interdependence as much as respect for their distinctive identities. At the Colombo consultation of 1974 the vision of a worldwide "community of communities" was discussed. Such a vision may be helpful in the search for community in a pluralistic world; it is not one of homogeneous unity or totalitarian uniformity, nor does it envisage self-contained



communities, simply co-existing. Rather it emphasises the positive part which existing communities may play in developing the community of humankind (cf. para 6). For Christians the thought of a community of communities is further related to the kingly rule of God over all human communities.

### **B. The Christian community: The churches and the Church**

9. Scattered within the world of human communities, we as Christians look for signs of God's kingly rule and truly believe in our community with Christians everywhere in the Church, the Body of Christ. Being fully in the world, the Christian community shares in the many distinctions and divisions within and between the communities of humankind. It manifests immense cultural variety within itself, which we are bound to acknowledge as affecting not only the practice but also the interpretation of the faith by different groups of Christians. This is exemplified in South Asia by Christians who speak of their struggle, within cultures moulded by Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, to express their Christian faith in a spirit at once obedient to the Gospel and related to the cultural context. In Europe and North America the understanding and practice of the Christian faith has been deeply influenced by western culture.

10. Our experience as Christians in this widely scattered community is very varied. There are churches who live in situations of social, cultural and national suppression, where their identity is threatened and their freedom restricted. There are times and places where Christians may have to stand apart from others in loyalty to Christ but this does not absolve Christians who have indulged in the temptations of cultural arrogance and communal exclusiveness, both consciously and unconsciously. Thus they have contributed to the divisions within the community of humankind, and have created antagonisms between different groups within the Christian community itself. Christians, therefore, must stand under the judgement of God. We believe that there is a real sense in which our unity with all peoples lies in our common participation in- all that has so tragically created divisions within the world. It is in this way that we relate to our theme the experience of the empirical churches that they constantly need God's forgiveness.

11. But amidst this complex, confusing and humbling situation we believe that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ retains its divine given-ness. The Gospel cannot be limited to any particular culture,



but through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit sheds its light in them all and upon them all. Nor is the truth of the Gospel distorted by the sinfulness of its Christian adherents. Rather, the Gospel calls them individually and in community to repentance and confession, and invites them into newness of life in the risen Christ. This reality of renewed Christian community pertains to our very deepest experience as Christians. There are many ways of speaking of this experience. For example:

- our communion in the Church as sacrament of the reconciliation and unity of humankind recreated through the saving activity of God in Jesus Christ;
- our communion with God who, in the fullness of His Trinity calls humankind into unity with Him in His eternal communion with His entire creation;
- our communion in fellowship with all members of the Body of Christ through history, across distinction of race, sex, caste and culture;
- a conviction that God in Christ has set us free for communion with all peoples and everything which is made holy by the work of God.

Though we may express our conviction of the reality of this community in different ways, we hold fast to God in Christ who nourishes His church by Word and Sacraments.

12. We must acknowledge the close relation between our concern for dialogue and our work for visible Church unity. It is not only that the different confessional traditions have been an influence on the different approaches to dialogue and that questions concerning dialogue are seriously discussed within and between churches, but also the contribution of Christians to dialogue is distorted by division among them.

13. In the WCC we experience both the possibility for common confession of faith and worship together and also the obstacles to Christian unity. We are agreed in giving a vital place in our thinking to Bible study and worship; we are able to worship our one Lord in the very different ways of the churches represented among us. Yet we are also aware of problems concerning the authority of the Bible remaining unsolved among us and of the fact that we are not yet part of one eucharistic fellowship. It is not surprising therefore that there is controversy among Christians about the meditative use (rather than

simply the intellectual study) of the holy books of other faiths and about the question of common worship between those of different faiths. There is need for further careful and sensitive study of these issues, and we request the DFI to encourage such study among the member churches of the WCC and with our partners in dialogue.

14. As Christians we are conscious of a tension between the Christian community as we experience it to be in the world of human communities, and as we believe it in essence to be in the promise of God. The tension is fundamental to our Christian identity. We cannot resolve it, nor should we seek to avoid it. In the heart of this tension we discover the character of the Christian Church as a sign at once of people's need for fuller and deeper community, and of God's promise of a restored human community in Christ. Our consciousness of the tension must preclude any trace of triumphalism in the life of the Christian Church in the communities of humankind. It must also preclude any trace of condescension towards our fellow human beings. Rather it should evoke in us an attitude of real humility towards all peoples since we know that we together with all our brothers and sisters have fallen short of the community which God intends.

15. We understand our calling as Christians to be that of participating fully in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) with the courage of conviction to enable us to be adventurous and take risks. To this end we could humbly share with all our fellow human beings in a compelling pilgrimage. We are specifically disciples of Christ, but we refuse to limit Him to the dimensions of our human understanding. In our relationships within the many human communities we believe that we come to know Christ more fully through faith as Son of God and Saviour of the world; we grow in His service within the world; and we rejoice in the hope which He gives.

## PART II: ON DIALOGUE

### C. Reasons for dialogue

16. The term "dialogue in community", is useful in that it gives concreteness to Christian reflection on dialogue. Moreover it focuses attention on the reasons for being in dialogue, which can be identified in two related categories.

Most Christians today live out their lives in actual community with people who may be committed to faiths and ideologies other than their own. They live in families sometimes of mixed faiths and ideologies; they live as neighbours in the same towns and villages;

---

they need to build up their relationships expressing mutual human care and searching for mutual understanding. This sort of dialogue is very practical, concerned with the problems of modern life—the social, political, ecological, and, above all, the ordinary and familiar.

But there are concerns beyond the local which require Christians to engage in dialogue towards the realization of a wider community in which peace and justice may be more fully realised. This leads in turn to a dialogue between communities, in which issues of national and international concern are tackled.

17. No more than “community” can “dialogue” be precisely defined. Rather it has to be described, experienced and developed as a life-style. As human beings we have learned to speak; we talk, chatter, give and receive information, have discussions all this is not yet dialogue. Now and then it happens that out of our talking and our relationships arises a deeper encounter, an opening up, in more than intellectual terms, of each to the concerns of the other. This is experienced by families and friends, and by those who share the same faiths, or ideology; but we are particularly concerned with the dialogue which reaches across differences of faith, ideology and culture, even where the partners in dialogue do not agree on important central aspects of human life. Dialogue can be recognised as a welcome way of obedience to the commandment of the Decalogue: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour”. Dialogue helps us not to disfigure the image of our neighbours of different faiths and ideologies. It has been the experience of many Christians that this dialogue is indeed possible on the basis of a mutual trust and a respect for the integrity of each participant’s identity.

18. Dialogue, therefore, is a fundamental part of Christian service within community. In dialogue Christians actively respond to the command to “love God and your neighbour as yourself”. As an expression of love engagement in dialogue testifies to the love experienced in Christ. It is a joyful affirmation of life against chaos, and a participation with all who are allies of life in seeking the provisional goals of a better human community. Thus “dialogue in community” is not a secret weapon in the armoury of an aggressive Christian militancy. Rather it is a means of living our faith in Christ in service of community with one’s neighbours.

19. In this sense dialogue has a distinctive and rightful place within Christian life, in a manner directly comparable to other forms of service. But “distinctive” does not mean totally different or separate. In dialogue

Christians seek “to speak the truth in a spirit of love”, not naively “to be tossed to and fro, and be carried about with every wind of doctrine”. (Eph. 4.14-15). In giving their witness they recognise that in most circumstances today the spirit of dialogue is necessary. For this reason we do not see dialogue and the giving of witness as standing in any contradiction to one another. Indeed, as Christians enter dialogue with their commitment to Jesus Christ, time and again the relationship of dialogue gives opportunity for authentic witness. Thus, to the member churches of the WCC we feel able with integrity to commend the way of dialogue as one in which Jesus Christ can be confessed in the world today; at the same time we feel able with integrity to assure our partners in dialogue that we come not as manipulators but as genuine fellow-pilgrims, to speak with them of what we believe God to have done in Jesus Christ who has gone before us, but whom we seek to meet anew in dialogue.

#### **D. The theological significance of people of other faiths and ideologies**

20. Christians engaged in faithful “dialogue in community” with people of other faiths and ideologies cannot avoid asking themselves penetrating questions about the place of these people in the activity of God in history. They ask these questions not in theory, but in terms of what God may be doing in the lives of hundreds of millions of men and women who live in and seek community together with Christians, but along different ways. So dialogue should proceed in terms of people of other faiths and ideologies rather than of theoretical, impersonal systems. This is not to deny the importance of religious traditions and their inter-relationships but it is vital to examine how faiths and ideologies have given direction to the daily living of individuals and groups and actually affect dialogue on both sides.

21. Approaching the theological questions in this spirit Christians should proceed:

- with repentance, because they know how easily they misconstrue God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, betraying it in their actions and posturing as the owners of God’s truth rather than, as in fact they are, the undeserving recipients of grace;
- with humility, because they so often perceive in people of other faiths and ideologies a spirituality, dedication, compassion and a wisdom which should forbid them making judgements about others as though from a position of superiority; in particular they should avoid using ideas such as “anonymous Christians”,

---

“the Christian presence”, “the unknown Christ”, in ways not intended by those who proposed them for theological purposes or in ways prejudicial to the self-understanding of Christians and others;

- with joy, because it is not themselves they preach; it is Jesus Christ, perceived by many people of living faiths and ideologies as prophet, holy one, teacher, example; but confessed by Christians as Lord and Saviour, Himself the faithful witness and the coming one (Rev. 1.5-7);
- with integrity, because they do not enter into dialogue with others except in this penitent and humble joyfulness in the Lord Jesus Christ, making clear to others their own experience and witness, even as they seek to hear from others their expressions of deepest conviction and insight. All these would mean an openness and exposure, the capacity to be wounded which we see in the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and which we sum up in the word vulnerability.

22. Only in this spirit can Christians hope to address themselves creatively to the theological questions posed by other faiths and by ideologies. Christians from different backgrounds are growing in understanding in the following areas in particular:

- that renewed attention must be given to the doctrine of creation, particularly as they may see it illuminated by the Christian understanding of God as one Holy Trinity and by the resurrection and glorification of Christ;
- that fundamental questions about the nature and activity of God and the doctrine of the Spirit arise in dialogue, and the christological discussion must take place with this comprehensive reference; that the Bible, with all the aids to its understanding and appropriation from the churches’ tradition and scholarship, is to be used creatively as the basis for Christian reflection on the issues that arise, giving both encouragement and warning, though it cannot be assumed as a reference point for partners in dialogue;
- that the theological problems of church unity also need to be viewed in relation to the concern for dialogue;
- that the aim of dialogue is not reduction of living faiths and ideologies to a lowest common denominator, not only a comparison and discussion of symbols and concepts, but the enabling of a true encounter between those spiritual insights



and experiences which are only found at the deepest levels of human life.

23. We look forward to further fruitful discussions of these issues (among many others) within our Christian circles but also in situations of dialogue. There are other questions, where agreement is more difficult and sometimes impossible, but these also we commend for further theological attention:

- What is the relation between the universal creative/redemptive activity of God towards all humankind and the particular creative/redemptive activity of God in the history of Israel and in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
- Are Christians to speak of God's work in the lives of all men and women only in tentative terms of hope that they may experience something of Him, or more positively in terms of God's self-disclosure to people of living faiths and ideologies and in the struggle of human life?
- How are Christians to find from the Bible criteria in their approach to people of other faiths and ideologies, recognising, as they must, the authority accorded to the Bible by Christians of all centuries, particular questions concerning the authority of the Old Testament for the Christian Church, and the fact that the partners in dialogue have other starting points and resources, both in holy books and traditions of teaching?
- What is the biblical view and Christian experience of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and is it right and helpful to understand the work of God outside the Church in terms of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit?

### **E. Syncretism**

24. In dialogue Christians are called to be adventurous, and they must be ready to take risks; but also to be watchful and wide awake for God. Is syncretism a danger for which Christians must be alert?

25. There is a positive need for a genuine "translation" of the Christian message in every time and place. This need is recognised as soon as the Bible translators begin their work in a particular language and have to weigh the cultural and philosophical overtones and undertones of its words. But there is also a wider "translation" of the message by expressing it in artistic, dramatic, liturgical and above all in relational terms which are appropriate to convey the authenticity of the message in ways authentically indigenous, often through the



---

theologically tested use of the symbols and concepts of a particular community.

26. Despite attempts to rescue the word “syncretism” it now conveys, after its previous uses in Christian debate, a negative evaluation. This is clearly the case if it means, as the Nairobi Assembly used the word, “conscious or unconscious human attempts to create a new religion composed of elements taken from different religions”. In this sense syncretism is also rejected by the dialogue partners, although there may be some who in their alienation are seeking help from many sources and do not regard syncretism negatively.

27. The word “syncretism” is, however, more widely used than at Nairobi and particularly to warn against two other dangers.

The first danger is that in attempting to “translate” the Christian message for a cultural setting or in approach to faiths and ideologies with which Christians are in dialogue partnership, they may go too far and compromise the authenticity of Christian faith and life. They have the Bible to guide them but there is always risk in seeking to express the Gospel in a new setting: for instance, the early Christian struggle against heresy in the debate with Gnosticism; or the compromising of the Gospel in the so-called “civil religions” of the West. It is salutary to examine such examples lest it be supposed that syncretism is a risk endemic only in certain continents.

A second danger is that of interpreting a living faith not in its own terms but in terms of another faith or ideology. This is illegitimate on the principles of both scholarship and dialogue. In this way Christianity may be “syncretized” by seeing it as only a variant of some other approach to God, or another faith may be wrongly “syncretized” by seeing it only as partial understanding of what Christians believe that they know in full. There is a particular need for further study of the way in which this kind of syncretism can take place between a faith and an ideology.

28. Both these are real dangers and there will be differences of judgement among Christians and between churches as to when these dangers are threatening, or have actually overtaken particular Christian enterprises. Despite the recognised dangers Christians should welcome and gladly engage in the venture of exploratory faith. The particular risks of syncretism in the modern world should not lead Christians to refrain from dialogue, but are an additional reason for engaging in dialogue so that the issues may be clarified.

29. Within the ecumenical movement the practice of dialogue and the giving of witness have sometimes evoked mutual suspicion. God is very patient with the Church, giving it space and time for discovery of His way and its riches (cf. II Pet. 3.9). There is need within the ecumenical fellowship to give one another space and time space and time, for instance, in India or Ghana to explore the richness of the Gospel in a setting very different from that of "Hellenized" Europe; space and time, for instance, in Korea to develop the present striking evangelistic work of the churches; space and time, for instance, in Europe to adjust to a new situation in which secularity is now being changed by new religious interest not expressed in traditional terms. The diversity of dialogue itself must be recognised in its particular content and in its relation to specific context.

### **PART III: GUIDELINES RECOMMENDED TO THE CHURCHES FOR STUDY AND ACTION**

From the experiences of Christians in dialogue with people of living faiths and ideologies and from the statement of the Central Committee on "Dialogue in Community" it is evident that dialogue has become urgent for many Christians today. The Guidelines which follow are built upon the Christian convictions expressed in the first two parts of this statement; the statement and the guidelines should be read together.

It is Christian faith in the Triune God Creator of all humankind, Redeemer in Jesus Christ, revealing and renewing Spirit which calls us Christians to human relationship with our many neighbours. Such relationship includes dialogue: witnessing to our deepest convictions and listening to those of our neighbours. It is Christian faith which sets us free to be open to the faiths of others, to risk, to trust and to be vulnerable. In dialogue, conviction and openness are held in balance.

In a world in which Christians have many neighbours, dialogue is not only an activity of meetings and conferences, it is also a way of living out Christian faith in relationship and commitment to those neighbours with whom Christians share town, cities, nations, and the earth as a whole. Dialogue is a style of living in relationship with neighbours. This in no way replaces or limits our Christian obligation to witness, as partners enter into dialogue with their respective commitments.

These guidelines are offered to member churches of the WCC and to individual congregations in awareness of the great diversity of

situations in which they find themselves. The neighbours with whom Christians enter into relationship in dialogue may be partners in common social, economic and political crises and quests; companions in scholarly work or intellectual and spiritual exploration; or, literally, the people next door. In some places, Christians and the church as an institution are in positions of power and influence, and their neighbours are without power. In other places it is the Christians who are the powerless. There are also situations of tension and conflict where dialogue may not be possible or opportunities very limited. In many places people of different living faiths interact not only with each other, but also with people of various ideologies, though sometimes it is difficult to make a clearcut distinction between religions and ideologies, for there are religious dimensions of ideologies and ideological dimensions of religions, Christianity included. The emergence of new religious groups in many countries has brought new dimensions and tensions to inter-religious relationships. With all this diversity in mind, the following guidelines are commended to member churches for their consideration and discussion, testing and evaluation, and for their elaboration in each specific situation.

## LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING IN DIALOGUE

1. *Churches should seek ways in which Christian communities can enter into dialogue with their neighbours of different faiths and ideologies.*

They should also discover ways of responding to similar initiatives by their neighbours in the community.

2. *Dialogues should normally be planned together.*

When planned together with partners of other living faiths or ideological convictions they may well focus on particular issues: theological or religious, political or social.

3. *Partners in dialogue should take stock of the religious, cultural and ideological diversity of their local situation.*

Only by being alert both to the particular areas of tension and discrimination and to the particular opportunities for conversation and cooperation in their own context will Christians and their neighbours be able to create the conditions for dialogue. They should be especially alert to infringements of the basic human rights of religious, cultural or ideological minority groups.

4. *Partners in dialogue should be free to "define themselves".*

One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms. This is of primary

importance since self-serving descriptions of other peoples' faith are one of the roots of prejudice, stereotyping, and condescension. Listening carefully to the neighbours' self-understanding enables Christians better to obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours, whether those neighbours be of long established religious, cultural or ideological traditions or members of new religious groups. It should be recognised by partners in dialogue that any religion or ideology claiming universality, apart from having an understanding of itself, will also have its own interpretations of other religions and ideologies as part of its own self-understanding. Dialogue gives an opportunity for a mutual questioning of the understanding partners have about themselves and others. It is out of a reciprocal willingness to listen and learn that significant dialogue grows.

*5. Dialogue should generate educational efforts in the community.*

In many cases Christians, utilising the experience of dialogue, must take the initiative in education in order to restore the distorted image of the neighbours that may already exist in their communities and to advance Christian understanding of people of other living faiths and ideologies.

Even in those situations where Christians do not live in close contact with people of the various religious, cultural and ideological traditions, they should take seriously the responsibility to study and to learn about these other traditions.

Member churches should consider what action they can take in the following educational areas:

- (i) Teaching programmes in schools, colleges, and adult education systems to enhance the understanding of the cultural, religious and ideological traditions of humankind; such programmes should, wherever possible, invite adherents of those traditions to make their contribution.
- (ii) Teaching programmes in theological seminaries and colleges to prepare Christian ministers with the training and sensitivity necessary for inter-religious dialogue.
- (iii) Positive relationships with programmes in university departments and other institutes of higher learning which are concerned with the academic study of religion.
- (iv) The review of material used and teachings customarily given in courses of instruction at all levels in the churches, including at theological colleges and seminaries, with a view to eliminating

anything which encourages fanaticism and insensitivity to people of other faiths and ideologies.

- (v) The development of church school materials for the study of people of other faiths and ideologies.
- (vi) The provision of courses for people who may be sent to serve in other cultures or who may travel as tourists in such cultures to promote their greater understanding and sensitivity.
- (vii) Responsible reaction to school text books and media presentations which may prejudice the image of the neighbour.
- (viii) The creative use of the media, radio, television etc., wherever possible in order to reach a wider audience in efforts to expand understanding of people of other faiths and ideologies.

### **Sharing and living together in dialogue**

*6. Dialogue is most vital when its participants actually share their lives together.*

It is in existing communities where families meet as neighbours and children play together that spontaneous dialogue develops. Where people of different faiths and ideologies share common activities, intellectual interests, and spiritual quests, dialogue can be related to the whole of life and can become a style of living-in-relationship. The person who asks a neighbour of another faith to explain the meaning of a custom or festival has actually taken the first step in dialogue.

Of course, dialogue between long-term neighbours may be frustrated by deeply engrained suspicions, and men and women will have to reckon not only with the communities they seek but also with the barriers between their present communities.

*7. Dialogue should be pursued by sharing in common enterprises in community.*

Common activities and experiences are the most fruitful setting for dialogue on issues of faith, ideology and action. It is in the search for a just community of humankind that Christians and their neighbours will be able to help each other break out of cultural, educational, political, and social isolation in order to realise a more participatory society. It may well be that in particular settings such common enterprises will generate inter-religious committees or organisations to facilitate this kind of dialogue-in-action.

*8. Partners in dialogue should be aware of their ideological commitments.*

Dialogue should help to reveal and to understand the ideological components of religions in particular situations. When Christians find



themselves in communities with neighbours of other living faiths they may have common or diverse ideological convictions.

In such situations partners need to be sensitive to both religious and ideological dimensions of the ongoing dialogue. Where Christians find themselves in communities with people of secular ideological convictions, the dialogue will at least expose shared contributions in a common search for the provisional goals of a better human community. Here dialogue may begin as a kind of "internal dialogue" seeking to bring to explicit reflection and discussion issues in the encounter of the Gospel both with ideological factors in various communities where Christians find themselves, and with the ideological assumptions of Christians themselves.

*9. Partners in dialogue should be aware of cultural loyalties.*

Dialogue and sensitivity to neighbours need to be developed in the area of relating Christian faith to cultures. This applies especially to those places where traditional and popular culture has been unduly despised and rejected by the churches. A culture should not be romanticised or made into a false absolute but it may often challenge and enrich the expression of the Christian faith. After careful interpretation and discrimination local cultures may make meaningful contributions in symbols and liturgy, social structures, relations, patterns of healing, art, architecture and music, dance and drama, poetry and literature.

*10. Dialogue will raise the question of sharing in celebrations, rituals, worship and meditation.*

Human communities draw together, express, and renew themselves in ritual and worship, and dialogue presumes an attitude of respect for the ritual expressions of the neighbours' community. Dialogue at times includes extending and accepting invitations to visit each other as guests and observers in family and community rituals, ceremonies, and festivals. Such occasions provide excellent opportunities to enhance the mutual understanding of neighbours.

Working together in common projects and activities or visiting in homes and at festivals will eventually raise the very difficult and important question of fuller sharing in common prayer, worship or meditation. This is one of the areas of dialogue which is most controversial and most in need of further exploration.

Whether or not any such activities are undertaken, dialogue partners will want to face squarely the issues raised, sensitive to one another's



---

integrity and fully realising the assumptions and implications of what is done or not done.

### **Planning for dialogue**

11. *Dialogue should be planned and undertaken ecumenically, wherever possible.*

Member churches should move forward in planning for dialogue in cooperation with one another. This may well mean that regional and local councils of churches will have a separate commission on dialogue.

12. *Planning for dialogue will necessitate regional and local guidelines.*

As the member churches of the WCC consider, test and evaluate these guidelines they will need to work out for themselves and with their specific partners in dialogue statements and guidelines for their own use in particular situations. The WCC can best assist the member churches in their specific dialogues by itself concentrating upon the world-wide features of the Christian dialogue with people of particular religions and ideologies. For this purpose, the WCC will arrange appropriate consultations at the world level.

13. *Dialogue can be helped by selective participation in world inter-religious meetings and organisations.*

There are now many organisations linking world religions and seeking to enable them to cooperate for various purposes, such as the struggle for peace and justice in the community and among the nations. Christians involved in dialogue need to be selective in their participation in the meetings arranged by such organisations. Christian representatives should guard the mutual recognition of and respect for the integrity of each faith. On occasion it may be necessary for Christians to make clear that their participation does not necessarily signify acceptance of the underlying assumptions of a particular meeting or organisation. Christians will normally avoid being identified with alliances against other religions or against ideologies as such. The WCC will be willing to provide consultant-observers for selected meetings of this kind but will not at present take a direct official part in the organisational structure of world inter-religious organisations.

To enter into dialogue requires an opening of the mind and heart to others. It is an undertaking which requires risk as well as a deep sense of vocation. It is impossible without sensitivity to the richly varied life of humankind. This opening, this risk, this vocation, this

sensitivity are at the heart of the ecumenical movement and in the deepest currents of the life of the churches. It is therefore with a commitment to the importance of dialogue for the member churches of the WCC that the Central Committee offers this Statement and these Guidelines to the churches.

## GROUND RULES FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

**Leonard Swidler**

*Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Winter 1983 (used with permission)*

Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow. This very definition of dialogue embodies the first commandment of dialogue, as will be expanded below.

In the religious sphere in the past, we came together to discuss with those differing with us, for example, Catholics with Protestants, either to defeat an opponent, or to learn about an opponent so as to deal more effectively with him or her, or at best to negotiate with him or her. If we faced each other at all, it was in confrontation—sometimes more openly polemically, sometimes more subtly so, but always with the ultimate goal of defeating the other, because we were convinced that we alone had the absolute truth.

But that is not what dialogue is. Dialogue is *not* debate. In dialogue each partner must listen to the other as openly and sympathetically as he or she can in an attempt to understand the other's position as precisely and, as it were, as much from within, as possible. Such an attitude automatically includes the assumption that, if we would act with integrity, we would have to change, and change can be disturbing.

We are here, of course, speaking of a specific kind of dialogue, an inter-religious dialogue. To have such, it is not sufficient that the dialogue partners discuss a religious subject. Rather, they must come to the dialogue as persons somehow significantly identified with a religious community. If I were neither a Jew nor a Muslim nor a Christian, for example, I could not participate as a "partner" in a Jewish-Christian-Muslim inter-religious dialogue, though I might listen in, ask some questions for information, and make some helpful comments.

It is obvious that inter-religious dialogue is something new under the sun. We could not conceive of it, let alone do it in the past. How,

then, can we effectively engage in this new thing? The following are some basic ground rules, or “commandments,” of inter-religious dialogue that must be observed if dialogue is actually to take place. These are not theoretical rules, or commandments given from “on high,” but ones that have been learned from hard experience.

FIRST COMMANDMENT: *The primary purpose of dialogue is to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality and then to act accordingly.* Minimally, the very fact that I learn that my dialogue partner believes “this” rather than “that” proportionally changes my attitude toward her; and a change in my attitude is significant change in me. We enter into dialogue so that we can learn, change, and grow, not so we can force change on the other, as one hopes to do in debate – a hope which is realised in inverse proportion to the frequency and ferocity with which debate is entered into. On the other hand, because in dialogue each partner comes with the intention of learning and changing herself, one’s partner in fact will also change. Thus the alleged goal of debate, and much more, is accomplished far more effectively by dialogue.

SECOND COMMANDMENT: *Inter-religious dialogue must be a two-sided project—within each religious community and between religious communities.* Because of the “corporate” nature of inter-religious dialogue, and since the primary goal of dialogue is that each partner learn and change himself, it is also necessary that each participant enter into dialogue not only with his partner across the faith line—the Lutheran with the Anglican, for example—but also with his coreligionists, with his fellow Lutherans, to share with them the fruits of the inter-religious dialogue. Only thus can the whole community eventually learn and change, moving toward an ever more perceptive insight into reality.

THIRID COMMANDMENT: *Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity.* It should be made clear in what direction the major and minor thrusts of the tradition move, what the future shifts might be, and, if necessary, where the participant has difficulties with her own tradition. No false fronts have any place in dialogue.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT: *Each participant must assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners.* Not only will the absence of sincerity prevent dialogue from happening, but the absence of the assumption of the partners’ sincerity will do so as well. In brief: no trust, no dialogue.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT: *Each participant must define himself.* Only the Jew, for example, can define from the inside what it means to be a Jew. The rest can only describe what it looks like from the outside. Moreover, because dialogue is a dynamic medium, as each participant learns, he will change and hence continually deepen, expand, and modify his self-definition as a Jew—being careful to remain in constant dialogue with fellow Jews. Thus it is mandatory that each dialogue partner define what it means to be an authentic member of his own tradition.

*Conversely—the one interpreted must be able to recognise herself in the interpretation.* This is the golden rule of inter-religious hermeneutics, as has been often reiterated by the “apostle of inter-religious dialogue,” Raimundo Panikkar. For the sake of understanding, each dialogue participant will naturally attempt to express for herself what she thinks is the meaning of the partner’s statement: the partner must be able to recognise herself in that expression. The advocate of “a world theology,” Wilfred Cantwell Smith, would add that the expression must also be verifiable by critical observers who are not involved.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT: *Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are.* Rather, each partner should not only listen to the other partner with openness and sympathy but also attempt to agree with the dialogue partner as far as is possible while still maintaining integrity with his own tradition: where he absolutely can agree no further without violating his own integrity, precisely there is the real point of disagreement – which most often turns out to be different from the point of disagreement that was falsely assumed ahead of time.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: *Dialogue can take place only between equals, or par cum pari* as Vatican II put it. This means that not only can there be no dialogue between a skilled scholar and a “person in the pew” type (at most there can only be a garnering of data in the manner of an interrogation), but also there can be no such thing as a one-way dialogue. For example, Jewish-Christian discussions begun in the 1960’s were mainly only prologomena to inter-religious dialogue. Understandably and properly, the Jews came to these exchanges only to teach the Christians, although the Christians came mainly to learn. But, if authentic inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Jews is to occur, then the Jews must also come mainly to learn; only then will it be par cum pari.

---

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: *Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust.* Although inter-religious dialogue must occur with some kind of “corporate” dimension, that is, the participants must be involved as members of a religious community – for instance, qua Buddhists or Hindus – it is also fundamentally true that it is only persons who can enter into dialogue. But a dialogue among persons can be built only on personal trust. Hence it is wise not to tackle the most difficult problems in the beginning, but rather to approach first those issues most likely to provide some common ground, thereby establishing the basis of human trust. Then, gradually, as this personal trust deepens and expands, the more thorny matters can be undertaken. Thus, as in learning we move from the known to the unknown, so in dialogue we proceed from commonly held matters – which, given our mutual ignorance resulting from centuries of hostility, will take us quite some time to discover fully – to discuss matters of disagreement.

NINTH COMMANDMENT: *Persons entering into religious dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious traditions.* A lack of such self-criticism implies that one’s own tradition already has all the correct answers. Such an attitude makes dialogue not only unnecessary, but even impossible, since we enter into dialogue primarily so we can learn – which obviously is impossible if our tradition has never made a misstep, if it has all the right answers. To be sure, in inter-religious dialogue one must stand within a religious tradition with integrity and conviction, but such integrity and conviction must include, not exclude, a healthy self-criticism. Without it there can be no dialogue – and, indeed, no integrity.

TENTH COMMANDMENT: *Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner’s religion “from within”,* for a religion is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart, and “whole being”, individual and communal. John Dunne here speaks of “passing over” into another’s religious experience and then coming back enlightened, broadened, and deepened.

Inter-religious dialogue operates in three areas: the practical, where we collaborate to help humanity; the cognitive, where we seek understanding and truth; and the “spiritual”, where we attempt to experience the partner’s tradition and wish to appropriate them into our own tradition. For example, in the Catholic-Protestant dialogue, Catholics have learned to stress the Bible, and Protestants have learned to appreciate the sacramental approach to Christian life – both values traditionally associated with the other’s religious community. If we



are serious, persistent, and sensitive enough in the dialogue, we may at times enter into phase three. Here we together begin to explore new areas of reality, of meaning, and of truth, or which neither of us had even been aware of before. We are brought face to face with this new, as-yet-unknown-to-us dimension of reality only because of questions, insights, probing produced in the dialogue. We may thus dare to say that patiently pursued dialogue can become an instrument of new “re-velation,” a further “un-veiling” of reality – on which we must act.

## **SOURCEBOOK OF THE WORLD’S RELIGIONS: AN INTERFAITH GUIDE TO RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY**

### **REVIEWS FROM AMAZON**

This anthology of interfaith articles, essays, and resources has a multifold mission: First off, it is a well-presented primer, introducing readers to 20 of the world’s religions and spiritual beliefs—Hinduism, Christianity, African Traditional Religion, Taoism, Wicca, and Nature Spirituality among them. Second, this carefully edited collection offers suggestions for becoming a more unified community, one that tolerates and respects the diversity of spiritual beliefs on the planet. Finally, it addresses the common ground amid all this diversity, such as respect for human rights, environmental responsibility, and creating a culture of peace.

Although the material is heady (e.g., discussions on “Scared Community at the Dawn of the Second Axial Age” and “Objectives of the 1893 World Parliament of Religions”), the essays are mostly written by accessible writers, such as Wayne Teasdale and Thomas Keating. Also, the editor, Joel Beversluis, offers excellent introductions to each submission, grounding readers in plenty of background, context, and insider’s information. — Gail Hudson

### **Book Description**

Now in its third edition, this is the most comprehensive work available on the rich variety of paths available to today’s spiritual seekers. More than a reference work, it explores how religions can collaborate to help the world. Essays explore interfaith community and spiritual practices such as theosophy, wicca, and indigenous religions. Portraits of all the major religious traditions are also included. This revised text offers an unparalleled look at where spirituality is headed in the coming millennium.



---

## Constructing a Local Network Multifaith

From the minister

Message from The Hon Peter McGauran MP, Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Australia's multifaith society reflects the religious beliefs of our diverse population. As a society, we need to promote understanding and respect for everyone, and to bind and strengthen our communities.

Australia is one of the world's most successful multicultural societies, embracing people from all religions, cultures and backgrounds. Australians continue to maintain a peaceful society, striving to ensure that every Australian has a sense of belonging and opportunity. Building effective relationships within and between people is an important contribution to social harmony, helping to focus all those involved to identify emerging issues and address common questions.

All Australians are in a good position to effect meaningful, positive change at the local community level. By reinforcing the basic principles of respect and understanding for all, and by dispelling misconceptions about other cultures and religions, we can all work towards common goals.

This kit has been created through the Australian Government's Living in Harmony initiative, which supports local communities to find local solutions in order to further a harmonious multicultural and multifaith society, and has been designed to help you to promote dialogue in your local community.

This information kit has been designed for religiously committed and civic-minded people to start a multifaith network in their local area. It consists of four sections:

1. An introduction outlining why, in changed times, it is now necessary to build multifaith networks across Australia.
2. A "How-to-do-it" section with suggested activities for local multifaith networks.
3. An annotated list of Australian interfaith organisations and useful resource websites.
4. An annotated list of key international interfaith organisations with other useful resource organisations and websites.

We hope that this kit will fulfil its overall purpose in building a harmonious multicultural and interfaith society. We thank all those people whose ideas and initiatives have contributed to this kit. They

are too many to acknowledge but they recognise the importance of the interfaith agenda in a changing Australia. They are all volunteers who, in their own faith commitment, recognise that, at the core of all authentic faith traditions, is the recognition, affirmation and welcoming of the other, the stranger, the alien, the foreigner, so that they remain no longer the stranger, the alien, the foreigner.

### **Why construct a local interfaith network?**

This information kit has been prepared to assist religiously committed and civic-minded people to construct an interfaith network in their local area. As the Roman Catholic theologian, Hans Kung, in his longstanding commitment to inter-religious understanding and to the articulation of a global ethic, has insisted, "there can be no peace unless there is peace between the religions". The ecumenical rapprochement during the 1960s and 1970s that brought together the mainstream Christian churches played a helpful role in creating a climate that led to the careful construction of a multicultural society of which we, as Australians, can be justifiably proud. But together interfaith understanding, interaction and cooperation will not happen automatically. Now is the historical moment to take a further step by addressing these issues. In contrast to inter-Christian ecumenical relationships, interfaith issues have never been at the forefront of Australian public life. This has been so even though they are central to the construction of social harmony and to the social policy of multiculturalism espoused by both sides of the political fence. Whatever our personal, ethnic and religious background, in Australia we all have to live under the same tent. The terrorist attacks of New York and Bali and the myriad of other troubling events since the turn of the Millennium have highlighted the increased pressures bearing down upon us who live on this vast and ancient island continent where Aboriginal spiritualities have been practised for thousands of years.

But even without New York and Bali, Australia would still have been required to address the interfaith issue if in less dramatic circumstances. Australia's religious profile is changing – the percentage in the 2001 census who claimed to have no religion has plateaued while the Buddhist population between 1996 and 2001 almost doubled. Both the Hindu and Muslim populations jumped by just over 40 per cent in the same intercensal period. Australia is becoming more, not less, religious, but religious in a different way. The last two decades has seen Australia become, albeit paradoxically, both a more secular and a more multifaith society.

---

## Religion and Relationships

Swami Agnivesh of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front in New Delhi and a noted interfaith activist has articulated his Spiritual Vision for the Dialogue of Religions. He suggests that authentic religion is about relationships. "Every religion tries to enable the human person to relate to the divine and to the rest of creation in a harmonious and mutually enriching fashion. It is from this perspective that the importance of the relationship between religions needs to be appreciated. An alienation between religions, or a relationship of mutual hostility, even apathy, implies a contradiction of the very idea of religion. Physicians need to heal themselves first. We need to work earnestly towards bringing about a wholesome relationship of constructive cooperation among religions"

Generating understanding, interaction and cooperation between the various faith communities, large and small, local and global, is no longer an option. Now that religion is at world centre stage, the interfaith challenge has become a necessity. And the answers to the world's current political and religious problems partly lie not in a secularism that often triggers a religious extremism, but in religious moderation and in ecumenical and interfaith activity.

As a result of the increasing cultural and religious diversity emerging in many parts of the world, the changing role of the nation state in a globalising world and, thirdly, the recent outbreaks of terrorist attacks, the interrelationship between the nation-state and faith communities is evolving. And faith communities, working in tandem with government authorities, have an important role to play in creating a civil society. They have a role in creating a nation's social capital which is concerned with the construction of solid, uncorrupted but flexible institutions and the facilitation of positive communicative processes between the groups that compose any society, all built upon authentic values, moral norms and ethical behaviours, whether within personal relationships, corporate behaviour or in the art of statecraft.

One of the major features of twentieth century history was the enduring stability of religion and its institutions—86 per cent of the world's population belong to a religious faith (2 billion are Christian, 1.2 are Muslim and .8 billion are Hindu) and in Australia, the comparable figure is about 75 per cent.

We now live in a world where it is less possible to speak of "Christendom" or "the Islamic world" or 'the Hindu world" or "the

Buddhist Confucian world". Religious diasporas continue to be extended across the world.

### **Positive Community Outcomes after the Terrorist Attacks**

While there were some negative responses to the events in New York, Washington and Bali, equally importantly and much more positively, there has been a constructive engagement between Muslim and other faith communities. Across Australia, many multifaith initiatives have occurred and this has created a new awareness and understanding.

In Australia, faith traditions with their focus on the ultimate and the absolute as well as the local and the universal have been key elements in the formation of Australia's pluralist society. Religious groupings have been formative of core social and moral Australian values and of public service, welfare and philanthropic traditions. With their localised presence, their community ethic and their universalist outlook, most religious groups have made positive contributions to the construction of Australia's multicultural society that has been recognised world-wide as a model and exemplar.

Now that religion is at world centre stage, the interfaith challenge has become a necessity. Faith communities have played a major role in helping to assist in the settlement of immigrants and making them feel welcome, in changing the attitudes of Australians in welcoming the stranger to our midst, in holding Migration Sundays and various festivals and conferences, in pressing governments to implement policies and programmes through bodies such as the Ecumenical Migration Centre and the Australian Catholic Migration Office, in creating a sense of belonging for immigrants and meeting their spiritual needs often in their first language and, lastly, in defusing ancient hatreds brought to Australia by immigrants and refugees as part of their historical baggage.

The second major positive consequence after the terrorist attacks is that we are seeing the development of local multifaith networks led by the World Conference of Religions for Peace. FECCA (Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia) has established APERO (Australian Partnership of Ethnic and Religious Organisations) in association with the Council for Multicultural Australia. There has been established a joint Christian-Jewish-Muslim dialogue; in Melbourne a joint Catholic-Muslim dialogue group has been established, and LaTrobe University initiated a series of dialogues between Christians

and Muslims. Griffith University has established its multifaith centre. These are very good moves, but more needs to be done at local level.

### **Basic Questions for Government and Religious Leaders**

The basic questions for the government and religious leaders at state and national levels are these:

- How do we, as leaders in a civil society, create a harmonious multifaith community, especially when that harmony may be challenged by overseas, and perhaps Australian, events of great provocation?
- How do we insulate and inoculate ourselves against religious extremism, and support religious moderation?

At the local level, religious leaders are themselves also under much greater scrutiny and accountability, and they must reflect upon a similar set of questions:

- How does my faith community contribute to creating a harmonious multifaith community?
- In my faith tradition and its long history, what is its attitude to other world faiths and their peoples?
- How well do members of my faith community understand the beliefs of other faiths?
- Is there anything in my theological tradition that militates against interfaith interaction and cooperation?
- Is there any aspect of my religious output that encourages anti-‘infidel’ attitudes or attitudes such as “other religions are the work of Satan”?

Faith communities can have four types of arrangements or interrelationships: those of (1) conflict (2) segregation (3) competition or (4) cooperation though in reality these relationships are a mixture of the types.

### **Relationship of Cooperation**

As has already been mentioned peace between the religions is very important. There cannot be harmony in Australia’s local government areas unless there is harmony between its faith communities working together in dialogue and some common activity.

Interfaith cooperation, firstly, means the different faith communities not just living harmoniously side-by-side (though this is a good beginning), but actively knowing about and respecting each other



and each other's beliefs in fair and honourable competition, not allowing the mistakes and tragedies of the distant and recent past to pervert the present. Secondly, it means the diverse faith communities working together in projects that bring mutual and rich benefits to the local and wider community in the spirit of unity-in-diversity. And thirdly, it means that the whole community becomes a lighthouse of interfaith cooperation not just to Australia but to the whole world which badly needs this example. Interfaith collaboration is not a luxury, it is a requirement, difficult though it might be to achieve. We benefit personally as our faith is challenged by other faiths, and our own faith is enriched by meeting faith-filled people from other traditions; the whole community benefits from this collaboration as strangers become friends.

It cannot be denied that many faiths explicitly claim or manifest an inner tendency to claim to be the true religion or the true revelation or the true way of liberation or exaltation. Perhaps it can be said that all religions are approximations of the truth or of ultimate reality. It would be a perversion of all authentic religion which has an all-embracing universalism if such beliefs, often based on a literalist interpretation of the sacred texts, were to descend into religious extremism. What is needed are persons who, committed to their faith which they will perceive as the best explanation of life's ultimate questions, make internal to themselves their commitment to persons of other faiths in constructing Australia as a multifaith corroboree.

This interfaith kit is designed to help pursue the creation and maintenance of relationships of engagement and cooperation between faiths in Australia. The kit is composed of several sections:

1. A "How to Do It" section on constructing an interfaith network in a local government or similar setting.
2. A list of Australian organisations and agencies, together with other resources, that might be helpful to civic and religious leaders who have committed themselves to the multifaith agenda.
3. A list of international organisations and website-sourced material that may be helpful in informing people about the technicalities of world faiths and interfaith activity.

These listings illustrate that across the world there are countless people committed to the interfaith agenda. The construction of a local interfaith network requires commitment, determination and an appreciation of the other. As Martin Buber, the great Jewish thinker,



---

once said, “In a genuine dialogue each of the partners, even when one stands in opposition to the other, heeds, affirms, and confirms his opponent as an existing other”.

## SECTION ONE

This “how-to-do-it” strategy for constructing a local multifaith network is based on information gathered by the World Conference of Religions for Peace in its activities and research carried out during the research project on Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia, conducted by the Australian Multicultural Foundation in association with WCRP and RMIT and Monash Universities. It consists of four parts:

1. Basic attitudes for interfaith interaction
2. Steps in constructing an interfaith network
3. Sixteen suggested activities
4. Stories of two local interfaith networks

### **1. Basic Attitudes for Interfaith Interaction**

According to one Jewish religious leader, “interfaith activity is a hard slog”. Single-group dominance or personality clashes can wreck interfaith collaboration. Past historical legacies and deep emotions are involved, and can be potentially destructive. According to the UK’s Interfaith Network<sup>2</sup> as part of its Code of Conduct in fostering interfaith relationships, as well as exercising goodwill, we need:

- To respect the freedom of those of each faith and no faith within the law to express their personal beliefs and convictions.
- To learn to understand what persons of each faith and no faith actually believe and value, allowing them to express this in their own terms.
- To respect the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behave in ways which cause needless offence.
- To recognise that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our faith traditions and never to compare our own ideals with other people’s practices.
- To work to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict and always seeking to avoid violence, verbal or physical, in our relationships.

There will be faith communities that do not wish to take part in multifaith activities or certain types of activities. The wish of some

faith communities to be left alone or their attitude to disagree with interfaith activists needs to be respected though this is not to say that such attitudes should not be quietly and firmly challenged.

When we are speaking about faith matters with each other, the UK Interfaith Network recommends that we do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This implies:

- To recognise that listening attentively as well as speaking honestly is necessary for a genuine conversation.
- To be honest and courageous in expressing our beliefs and religious allegiances.
- To be careful in not misrepresenting or disparaging other's beliefs and practices, no matter how difficult we might find in accepting them.
- To correct misunderstandings or misrepresentations not only of our own faith but also of other faiths whenever we come across them.
- To be straightforward about our intentions and to accept that in formal interfaith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all those present will be respected.

Missionising or proselytising should never be a principal motivation for entering into interfaith activity. In a multifaith society, missionising should be characterised by restraint and sensitivity for the other's dignity and freedom to choose. In a democratic society such as Australia, knocking on people's doors or speaking publicly in the street to proclaim one's faith is part of religious freedom.

## **2. Steps in Constructing an Interfaith Network**

There are many recipes in constructing a local interfaith network. Our general recipe is as follows:

*a. Formation of a Small Working Party:* An interfaith network can be started on the initiative of just one person or a small group. Sometimes, the initiative has come from a local councillor or from the mainstream Christian churches or from an enthused individual who identifies a need. From this, it is suggested that a small working party be formed – at this early stage, it does not have to be representative but it should be as inclusive as possible with sensitivity to establishing the credibility of the working party.

Throughout the process, maintaining credibility will always be an important task. Whilst many interfaith groups are established in reactive

circumstances such as September 11, the emphasis should be on the proactive.

As far as it is possible, obtain the support and preferably the participation of the local councillors and/or parliamentarians. Select a chairperson who may or may not be the longterm chair and who has the capacity to liaise successfully with local government authorities and across the different faith communities.

*b. Needs Analysis and Information Collection:* As part of its initial work, it is suggested that the working party conduct a brainstorming session of itself so as to do a needs analysis. This will feed into articulating a vision for the network with such questions as:

Is there a need for a local interfaith network?

What are the inter-religious needs for the local, national and global levels?

How could a local interfaith network help to meet local needs?

What are we trying to achieve? Why? And how?

As well as a needs analysis, the working party needs to collect as much information as is necessary. In particular, it needs to collect information regarding:

- The religious profile of the defined area.
- The places of worship in the defined area.
- List of key faith community leaders.

### **The Religious Profile of the Local Area:**

It is important to establish the religious profile of the area, including how it is changing. The best source is the most recent census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The local government authorities will almost certainly have information from the ABS.

You can begin here if you wish to obtain a general idea of what is available on this site. The site below gives a snapshot of some of the data from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

However, for information about religious affiliation from the same Census, you may need to download the Religious Affiliation package for a small fee from this site.

Another useful source for ABS data is that held on the website of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia at [www.fecca.org.au](http://www.fecca.org.au)

From these sources you should be able to find out which religious groups are represented in your municipality. It is strongly suggested that you write up this profile, identifying both the mainstream and the small minority faith communities and outlining any special features that might distinguish the profile from those of other local government areas or from the overall Australian profile.

### **The Places of Worship in the Local Area**

The local government authorities will probably have some contact details for these for bona fide community purposes, although privacy restrictions may apply to such information's release. The local telephone directory should give the numbers for places of worship within your municipality. However, probably the most accessible information source, certainly for the capital cities, are the most up-to-date street directories which include a list of Places of Worship with the map references.

Connected to this is the issue of membership for the interfaith network. Here there are no hard and fixed rules. Some networks define membership on the basis of groups with places of worship in the local government geographical boundaries, and perhaps with observer status for those faith groups without their own place of worship in the local area. This is an issue for small faith communities whose places of worship are spread far apart.

### **Local faith community leaders**

The drawing up of any up-to-date list of local faith community leaders may not be easy, given the other surprisingly large numbers of faith communities in any local government area, especially in metropolitan areas. Some local governments are committed to keeping such lists up-to-date though privacy considerations in some States may constitute a barrier. Faith leaders often change over a 3 – 5 year period. It may not be absolutely necessary to obtain an up-to-date list, but it is preferable and more personal.

### **The local telephone directory should give the numbers for places of worship within your municipality.**

*c. Approaching Local Faith Communities and their Leaders:* The critical moment in establishing a network is garnering the support of the local faith communities. Not all communities will participate though it will be important into the future to keep them informed of the progress and activities. After drawing up lists of the local faith communities, their places of worship and the names of the local faith

---

leaders, a letter of invitation should be sent for an inaugural meeting with a view to establishing the local interfaith network. This process should not be rushed.

The letter, in reflecting an essentially open process, should outline several key reasons for the formation of a network, the work already completed by the steering committee, the support already gained from local government authorities and other key community figures, its congruence with the Australian government's Living-in-Harmony programme and the desire to initiate a process and articulate a vision with a practical agenda that builds understanding and cooperation in multicultural Australia. There will always be some reluctance – the whole interfaith agenda has to be demystified, and assurances given that it is not an exercise in proselytism.

An issue with some religious leaders will be spoken English proficiency, and it may be desirable for the community to be represented by a person fully proficient in English. However, at meetings, chairpersons and other participants will need to be sensitive to the dynamics of cross-cultural communication in that there are differences in the way persons from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds impart information and respond to questions, in the way they handle the difficult paralinguistic of English and in the differences in body language that can result in miscommunication.

It is preferable to contact the leaders and meet them on a face-to-face basis. If there is a local Christian Ministers' Fraternal, this may be a useful starting point, and their cooperation would be vital. A generous lead time should be given in approaching the first meeting or gathering.

*d. Initial Meetings and Constructing an Agenda:* The first and subsequent initial meetings should be the opportunity to generate trust and confidence within the group. Detailed attention needs to be given to the dietary requirements of participants if there are to be refreshments. Momentum needs to be created across the community, and the press can play a useful role. Contact with local press personnel is to be encouraged, briefing them on the aims of the initiative.

During the initial meetings, input on basic attitudes for successful interfaith interaction and the experience of nearby interfaith networks will be useful. Explanations about each local faith community and its spiritual, and perhaps community work, will generate understanding.

Gradually but surely, the newly-formed network ought to move to articulate a common vision that addresses the local context, which

might coalesce around some common statement, and some initial activities, including an official launch of the network. The process should not be rushed, as some faith leaders may need time to convince their community of the worthwhile nature of the network, most particularly if the community carries with it some substantial historical baggage associated with a fellow faith participant.

### **3. Sixteen Suggested Activities**

The following list shows the diverse activities pursued by different interfaith networks. They have been done by at least one network or group in Australia.

#### **Interfaith Theological and Community Dialogue Sessions**

These are meetings or series of meetings where faith-committed persons come together to explain their own faith commitment to each other and/or to reflect upon a common theological or ethical theme from different faith perspectives. Such an activity requires participants or leaders who have specialist knowledge about their own faith and its history. The La Trobe Dialogue series bringing together Christians and Muslims is an example as is a full-day seminar led by the mayor held by the City of Darebin in September 2003.

#### **Interfaith Women's Group**

Interfaith movements around the world inevitably trigger the emergence of women's groups in order for women to meet as women and to balance the male bias of interfaith encounters. They are driven by a desire to share the faiths they treasure and wish to share. Their activities include faith-sharing, discussions of theological texts and visiting different places of worship. In Australia, an example is the Sydney Women's Interfaith Network (WIN) formed in 1999 and now officially registered with the Women's Organisations of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

#### **Interfaith Youth Group**

These groups are formed by religiously committed young people who commit themselves to the interfaith agenda. They are formed either by young people from one religious tradition or from a range of such traditions. In Australia, examples of the former are the Sydney-based Affinity group or the Melbourne-based Australian Intercultural Society, formed around young Turkish Muslims whose philosophy is inspired by the Muslim thinker Fethullah Gulen.



### **Multifaith Blessing Ceremonies**

Blessing prayers are proclaimed by the major local faith communities at some inauguration of an event or the opening of a public site. In Melbourne, a multifaith blessing ceremony was included in the official opening of Federation Square on the banks of the Yarra. Some blessing ceremonies are now occurring at the opening of the local council year or the installation of a mayor. An example is the City of Hume in Melbourne's north-western suburbs. Multifaith blessing ceremonies can also be used at times of national celebration such as happened at the opening of Parliament House in 1988.

### **Rostered Prayers for Council Meetings**

In this activity, local faith leaders are placed on a roster to lead the councillors in prayerful reflection at the beginning of each council meeting. The Cities of Dandenong, Moreland and Hume have pioneered this practice which recognises the multifaith nature of the local population.

### **Prayer Services for Peace**

This is where local interfaith groups gather together to pray for world peace. Usually they link in with peace groups or with local councils or are associated with the World Day of Peace. Useful websites for such occasions are those of the World Peace Prayer Society ([www.worldpeace.org](http://www.worldpeace.org)) and of World Prayers ([www.worldprayers.org](http://www.worldprayers.org)). The major examples were the various ceremonies held after the September 11, 2001, and October 12, 2002, tragedies.

### **Fasting Day**

Fasting is a core practice in many faith traditions, perhaps in preparation for major religious festivals, perhaps as a reminder of the gift of food from God, perhaps as a reparation for sinfulness, perhaps as a reminder of the poor and the starving. A fast day is nominated, usually in relation to a particular cause.

### **Multifaith Bus or Car Tours**

Several times a year, the interfaith network organises guided tours of a range of places of worship in the local area. The aim is to inform participants about the places of worship, whether a Uniting church or an Orthodox church or a mosque or a temple or a synagogue. Participants pay for the cost of the bus, or else people move in car convoys. The Dandenong network has pioneered this educational and

community activity. It can be extended to schools as part of a religious studies or a social studies programme.

### **Video/CD Production**

Two Australian municipalities (Fairfield in Sydney, Darebin in Melbourne) have produced videos or a CD, either visually documenting the faith communities and the local places of worship (Fairfield) or reflecting the views of young filmmakers on faith and religion from a multicultural perspective (Darebin). They have worked in tandem with municipal officials and steering committees.

### **Open Days of Places of Worship**

A variant on the multifaith bus tour is to coordinate an open day of selected places of worship in a local area. Such a day needs to be very well advertised through the local press, and guided tours are given in each place of worship at set times such as 10.30 a.m., 12.00 p.m., 1.30 p.m. and 3.00 p.m.. The guided tours must be given by persons knowledgeable about the place of worship, its architecture, its symbols and its religious artefacts and knowledgeable about the faith, able to respond to technical questions about the faith.

### **Multifaith Artistic Projects**

There has always been an established tradition of religious art in Australia. Projects could be a competition for art works on a multifaith theme for adults or a similar competition for school students. A variant, more to do with the literary than the visual arts, is a postcard competition in which school children complete a sentence which might begin, "Interfaith activity means..." or "Peace between the religions results from...".

### **Multifaith Concerts**

The South Australian Multifaith Association has sponsored concerts with artists drawn from many cultural and musical traditions as a way of conveying the interfaith message. It can also be a useful fundraiser. In Melbourne, the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities have presented folk concerts to bring about rapprochement between the two groups, each singing in the other's language.

### **Multifaith Sacred Spaces**

A growing and very important issue is the provision of a sacred space in public institutions to carry out religious ceremonies. It must

be a space that is reserved for prayer and sacred rites. The Dandenong Network was instrumental in transforming the chapel in the local hospital into a sacred space, decorated by a religious artist, that can be adapted and used by the different faith traditions. International sporting festivals such as the Olympic Games and the Commonwealth Games must provide such a space for the athletes and their chaplains.

### **Information Kit**

A local multifaith information kit, “Many Faiths, One People” was produced for 2003 by the Network of Faith Communities in the City of Dandenong, and it is a very useful exemplar. It consists of a well-produced booklet with an introduction (including a brief history of the network begun in 1989) with the common statement (see below), and brief explanations of the Aboriginal worldview, the major faiths of Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism and of the two spiritual organisations, the Brahma Kumaris and Sathya Sai. There are accompanying leaflets, outlining the common statement, what the network is and is not, a list of the religious festivals and the structure of the network. Details are available on the website [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com)

### **Preparation of a Common Statement**

Another worthwhile activity is the articulation of a common statement for public distribution – its purpose can be related to the local context. The Dandenong network has agreed on the following:

#### **Common Statement of Faith Communities**

We bring greetings from the faith communities to the Mayor, Councillors, and people of Greater Dandenong.

We offer to the City of Greater Dandenong our common commitment to live together in peace and goodwill.

We affirm our desire to promote respect and tolerance for the integrity of each other’s beliefs, cultures and traditions. This desire arises not only from our common humanity but also from our being people of faith and people of prayer.

We recognise that as neighbours, we have responsibilities to the world and ourselves. We therefore urge all citizens, both religious and non-religious, to put aside intolerance, prejudice and divisiveness, to attain peaceful and fruitful co-existence in our City.

**Social Justice Breakfast Meetings:**

The interfaith network in the City of Kingston meets four times a year for a breakfast in a restaurant, and a visiting speaker gives an address, usually on some current social justice issue. A variant on this is the sponsoring of social justice seminars, including a local issue which may lead to advocacy and lobbying efforts.

**4. Stories of Two Local Interfaith Networks: Moreland and Dandenong**

There are many interfaith groups or networks around Australia, especially in Melbourne. To give some guidance to committed people forming new networks, we have researched two networks to share their story. The Dandenong Network is the longest established in Australia. Both the Dandenong and Moreland networks are serving very multicultural and multifaith areas, and provide different models in interacting with Council and their range of activities.

**Moreland Interfaith Gathering**

The Moreland Interfaith Gathering is a committee of the Moreland City Council though it was formed neither by the Council nor is it governed by the Council. Rather the group was formed after the leaders of several faith communities in the municipality approached the Mayor with a view to establishing some means of communication between the different faith communities. This approach was prompted by the religious leaders' perception of the growing religious diversity in the Moreland area, and the need they felt to engage with newcomers in a meaningful way. Thus, while the initiative to form the Moreland Interfaith Gathering, as it became known, came from the Anglo Christian churches, the formal lead was taken by Council, which convened it and still provides its executive support.

The Gathering has now been in existence since 1996 and its membership includes the following faith communities: Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Catholic, Anglican, Greek Orthodox and Syro-Malabar Orthodox. Meetings are held every two months for the purposes of sharing ideas and organising community activities. The Councillor responsible for interfaith relations chairs these meetings. The Gathering has shared ideas about parish activities and issues encountered in parish and community life such as youth problems, drugs, unemployment and refugees and has taken appropriate action such as advocating for these issues and/or writing letters. It engages in various activities, notable among which was the organisation of an

interfaith ceremony following the attacks on Washington and New York on September 11, 2001. The workload of the Gathering varies according to local and broader community events and issues. According to its Council facilitator, one of the peaks was the period after September 11, 2001, when many of the faith leaders experienced enormous demands on their time to speak to community groups and took leadership roles on issues associated with this tragedy and its impact on the local multicultural community. The regular meetings produce, according to the facilitator, important communication and action initiatives. Such activities include the ceremony of blessing in a number of faith traditions, of the new Mayor and Councillors at the beginning of each Council year. This activity takes place annually. The Moreland Interfaith Gathering has also established the annual Moreland Fast Day, which was launched in 2001 to raise awareness about poverty issues in the community and which is held annually. Indeed, the Gathering of their leaders has had an impact on the wider local community by drawing the members of the different faith groups closer together, enabling them to communicate with each other and with Council. This communication serves to break down misconceptions about each other in the minds of the leaders, the faith communities themselves and the wider community. Members of the Gathering are now able to take on leadership roles in relation to issues that affect them. The Gathering now has a high profile in the local press, which now seeks out a spokesperson from among them when faith and other social issues impacting on the local community arise in the municipality. The Gathering, for example, needed to play a constructive and positive role in leading the response to the events of September 11, 2001, rather than an analytical and critical one. To this end, it organised an interfaith ceremony to mark the event, and issued a public statement urging mutual respect and understanding between faith groups.

What advice can this group offer to others thinking of forming such a group? The facilitator suggested the following:

- Be clear about the purpose of the group.
- Be open to all who wish to participate in it.
- Foster a sense of ownership of the group by all members.
- Share the tasks of running the group equally among all rather than leave the lion's share to any particular member.
- Ensure that invitations to events are extended to all members.
- Be apolitical in the sense of not bringing the politics of issues to the discussion table.



- Participate in other public events so as to contribute constructively to the life of the local multicultural and wider community.
- Take a leadership role and advocate on issues affecting the local community as the need arises.

The Gathering's Newsletters may be viewed on the website of the City of Moreland: [www.moreland.vic.gov.au](http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au)

### **Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong**

This Network, though supported by Council with a small grant and executive services, is not a formal committee of Council. The Network's President and Chairman are not Councillors but members of the Network. The Council's diversity officer acts, however, as the Network's convenor and as such, is an ex officio member of its executive. The membership of the Network is made up of seven faith groups. The following are among its current or proposed activities:

- five tours per year of the various places of worship in the municipality for the general public
- an annual forum attended by the hundreds featuring living-in-harmony activities
- a schools programme
- one hour information forums open to all Council staff and to the general public
- special activities on the annual Living-in-Harmony Day.

The network had chosen a 'partnership' relationship with Council rather than be a formal committee of Council, as the Moreland group had done. The basis was that the initiative had to be 'from the community for the community'. Council had provided welcome financial and administrative support, but responsibility for the life of the group needed to rest with its members. This strategy meant that Council would secure the network's contribution to civic affairs by invitation. For example, Council has recently launched a project to create a civic tapestry, and had referred the artist to the network for advice on its composition.

The Greater Dandenong Network has achieved community regard for the various contributions it makes to the life of the City. Prominent among these contributions are its training programmes for teachers and Council staff. The programme for teachers has been offered for several years, and teachers who complete the programme of tours to the local places of worship can count this towards their professional



---

development requirements. Indeed, the dates of these programmes are circularised in the local bulletins of the Victorian education ministry. The Network also takes pride in its work with the Dandenong Hospital to develop a multifaith sacred space.

A founding member of the Network provided an account of how the group came to be formed and some of its experiences over the subsequent years. The group started life as 'The Faith Communities of the City of Springvale'. When it was founded in the early 1980s, the City of Springvale had a large immigrant population, including a migrant hostel, and later it played host to a wave of Asian refugees. In this later period, the City experienced a number of problems with youth crime that attracted considerable attention from the press and the media. The Council of the former City of Springvale had already embraced the cultural diversity of its people, and had taken initiatives to ensure equality of access to its services. The youth crime problem, however, presented Council with a further challenge to which it responded by appointing an officer to promote harmony amid its diversity. The Council and this officer took the attitude that the City's situation should not be regarded as a problem but as an opportunity to promote harmony in diversity. This positive approach required symbols of cooperation between community groups and credible leadership in its promotion. This Council officer, knowing that the ministers of the local western Christian churches were already meeting in a local Ministers' Fraternal, approached them for help. The mainstream churches responded positively to this approach but the fundamentalist Pentecostal churches did not. The leaders of the mainstream churches accepted the officer's invitation to accompany her on visits to the faith groups other than Christian—as a result, the original Springvale interfaith network was formed. When the City of Springvale was amalgamated with adjoining municipalities to form the City of Greater Dandenong in 1989, this group faced the challenge of becoming not just a Springvale but also a city-wide group.

The group met this challenge successfully, thanks in no small measure to the work of the founding Chairman of the new body, a Uniting Church Minister, and the City of Greater Dandenong's diversity officer. The new group adopted the title 'Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong'. It was important for this group to be seen as standing and working together with the Council, so its leaders looked for occasions for achieving this. The first such occasion to present itself was the induction ceremony for the Mayor. At first, red tape impeded participation by a religious organisation in this ceremony

but in due course this was overcome. Now the leaders of the Network's faith groups take an official part in the ceremony. First, the leaders take prayers within their own faith communities for Mayor and Councillors. Then the Common Statement of Faith Communities, which was prepared for the first induction ceremony, is read at each such ceremony and presented to the incoming Mayor before the gallery and media with the faith leaders standing. This Common Statement was favoured over a formal constitution and documents of incorporation owing to difficulties perceived with the latter.

First, the leaders take prayers within their own faith communities for Mayor and Councillors. Then the Common Statement of Faith Communities, which was prepared for the first induction ceremony, is read at each such ceremony and presented to the incoming Mayor before the gallery and media with the faith leaders standing.

However, the idea of the Network is not merely that the leaders, but also the communities of the various faith groups should come together. To this end, an Annual Gathering is held at which the Common Statement is signed on behalf of the faith communities, and presented to the Mayor. On that occasion each community engages in some form of religious expression. In speaking of faith communities, this group believes it is important to remember that, while traditions such as the Buddhist or Catholic tradition may be one, there will nonetheless be many different communities of Buddhists and Catholics.

Each of the member faith communities of the Network is now rostered to provide the opening prayer for all Council meetings. The groups provide a prayer from their own traditions but one which respects other faiths. They recite it in whatever language they prefer but provide a summary of it in English. Councillors' attention to the prayer, while not perfect, is not as problematic as that of Members of the State and Federal Parliaments to the Lord's Prayer.

Another public expression of community harmony took the form of two banners created by member faith groups. These banners were made up of fifteen patches, each of the fifteen member faith groups contributing one patch. The first of these was made for presentation to the Mayor at the first induction ceremony. The second was intended to be cut up and a piece given to each faith community as a token of the occasion. However, the banner seemed all too beautiful to cut up, so it was decided that each community should hold the banner for a fortnight and then hand it over to the next community. This required communities to visit one another, which had a symbolism of its own.

When the attacks on New York and Washington took place on September 11, 2001, the Network already had a gathering scheduled for another purpose in the Sacred Space at the Dandenong Hospital. Members used this occasion to express themselves in prayer about these attacks. Acutely conscious of the diversity of their beliefs, the members are careful not to suggest a unity of faith that is not there. On this occasion, therefore, they expressed themselves religiously, 'not in common but in parallel, each from their own tradition'. Their religious diversity, in other words, was not allowed to stand in the way of their expressing solidarity with one another, nor on this occasion with those who suffered in so many ways as a result of these attacks. Indeed, every meeting of the network begins with some form of religious expression, often silence as the Buddhists prefer, and with a reading from the sacred texts of one of the member groups. In conclusion, it is worth noting one member's remark that interfaith relations are best learnt 'on the job'. The Springvale/Dandenong experience had been that the local governments had challenged the religious communities to take a risk by joining with the civic authorities in meeting a community problem. This challenge had required the faith communities to trust both the civic authorities and one another, and to renounce proselytism. It is perhaps as well, however, to recall another observation that there can be no model for interfaith networks because faith communities in every area face different situations to which they must devise their own responses.

The kit of this Interfaith Network may be viewed at the internet site of the City of Greater Dandenong: [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com)

## SECTION TWO

An annotated list of Australian Interfaith Organisations and Resource Websites.

This section lists the major national and state interfaith organisations in Australia together with other relevant major organisations and resource centres that may be useful to persons wishing to extend their network or access resource material or information regarding interfaith collaboration.

### **Australian Council for Christians and Jews**

The Australian Council for Christians and Jews is the umbrella body linking the following state and territory bodies. These bodies are groups of Christians and Jews who are drawn together because of their common heritage, a desire for understanding and dialogue and to explore their turbulent relations with each other. The aims are to

counter anti-Semitism, racism, prejudice and xenophobia and to encourage dialogue, education, research and communication.

### **Australian Partnership for Ethnic and Religious Organisations**

The Australian Partnership of Ethnic and Religious Organisations (APER0) was initiated early in 2003 as a result of discussions between the Council for Multicultural Australia and the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia with a view to advising the Australian government and promoting community harmony, inter-ethnic and interfaith acceptance, exchanging information about issues of importance, issuing joint statements, reporting on discriminatory behaviour and assisting communities at risk. Among the organisations currently represented on the APER0 are AFIC, AMES, AMF, ATSIC, CMA, ECAJ, FECCA, NCCA, WCRP and members from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh faiths. This umbrella organisation, which is administered by FECCA, meets several times a year.

### **Australian Federation of Islamic Councils**

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, founded in 1966, is the umbrella body for the nine Islamic Councils of NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory and Christmas Island. It coordinates many Muslim communities across the nation, sponsors the building of mosques and schools and represents Australian Muslims in governmental and interfaith affairs.

### **Australian Multicultural Foundation**

The Australian Multicultural Foundation, chaired by Sir James Gobbo, was established in 1988 with an investment grant from the Australian Bicentennial Authority. It aims to cultivate in all Australians a strong commitment to Australia as one people drawn from many cultures by adopting issues of national significance and initiating projects. In recent years, its focus has been not only on ethnic aged and multicultural youth projects but upon religion and cultural diversity issues, working with WCRP and the universities.

### **Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews (ANDCMJ)**

This dialogue venture was officially launched in March 2003 with five persons from each faith community appointed by the National Council of Churches in Australia, the Australian Federation of Islamic

Councils and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Its purpose is to provide the opportunity for the national bodies of each faith to come together in peace and harmony in the Australian context. It hopes to be a model of how different faiths can live harmoniously together and to build understanding, goodwill and a sense of community between themselves, to share knowledge and insights and to support each other in times of difficulty.

This Centre for Christian–Muslim Relations, established by the Columban missionary order, approaches Christian-Muslim relations in a Catholic context on the basis that God is experienced in many ways and that believers benefit enormously from each other. It organises conferences, meetings and inservice programmes, publishes a newsletter “Bridges” and has a library and resource centre.

### **Council for Multicultural Australia**

The Council for Multicultural Australia (CMA) was established in 2000 to implement Australia’s multicultural policy outlined in the 1999 statement, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*. This statement was updated for the 2003-2006 triennium. CMA’s responsibilities are broader than interfaith issues but they are seen as important within its terms of reference.

### **Executive Council of Australian Jewry**

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), established in 1944, is the official representative organisation and spokesperson of the Australian Jewish Community. Its constituents are the umbrella Jewish bodies in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, Hobart and the ACT, and it has affiliates such as the Australasian Union of Jewish Students and the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia. It is partner in various interfaith dialogues such as ANDCMJ, APERO and individual churches.

The Griffith University Multi-Faith Centre was initiated in 1999, and the new building was opened in May 2002 as a result of a gift of \$1M by the Amitabha Buddhist Association of Singapore. It serves as a facility for worship, practice and continuing education in religious traditions, for educational programmes for multifaith dialogue, for working together for understanding, peace and harmony, for modelling religious citizenship, for promoting research in religious cooperation and multifaith dialogue and for serving students and staff of the university and the broader community.



**National Council of Churches in Australia**

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) is the umbrella organisation for the major Christian churches in Australia. Fifteen churches are members: Anglican Church of Australia, Antiochian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, Assyrian Church of the East, Churches of Christ in Australia, Congregational Federation of Australia, Coptic Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church of Australia, Religious Society of Friends, Roman Catholic Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Salvation Army, Syrian Orthodox Church and the Uniting Church in Australia. In each state and territory, there is a State umbrella counterpart.

**National Library of Australia**

The National Library of Australia within its website specialises in “Australian Religion and Beliefs on the Internet” which includes links to sites with a whole range of resources for people interested in interfaith issues. Choose on the homepage “Australian Libraries Gateway”, and then select “religious” from the “Library Type’ box. It also currently lists 241 libraries that have significant, if not wholly, religious content. Many belong to secondary schools, especially Anglican and Catholic. Aside from one Muslim listing, all libraries belong to Christian and Jewish institutions. It is a very extensive listing with links to the actual libraries.

**South Australian MultiFaith Association**

This association is the only multifaith body in South Australia and it links into the WCRP world assembly. It is made up of members from nine traditions: Aboriginal, Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Unitarian. It conducts inter-religious events to increase understanding, sponsors educational activities, organises concerts and provides advice to the South Australian government.

**Uniting Church of Australia (National Committee on Relations with Other Faiths)**

This reference committee of the Uniting Church’s National Assembly promotes knowledge and understanding of other living world faiths and their communities in Australia and advises the Assembly on appropriate ways to foster relationships with such communities.

**Women’s Interfaith Network**

Centred in Sydney, the Women’s Interfaith Network (WIN) was formed in 1999 to address the absence of women in interfaith dialogue.



Rather than engaging in the political or justice areas, it focuses upon the treasuring and sharing of faith. It links into WCRP (Australia) and is a member of the international WCRP Women's Organisations.

WCRP (Australia) was formed in 1970 as part of the 49 member country World Conference of Religions for Peace, the world's largest coalition of religious persons working for peace and harmony, with headquarters in the UN Plaza in New York. It also links into the Asian Conference of Religion and Peace with headquarters in Seoul. In Australia, it has branches and sub-branches in Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart, Brisbane and Canberra. Its activities include working with governments for interfaith services, conducting research together with AMF and the universities, conducting educational activities and supporting local interfaith networks.

### SECTION THREE

#### INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH ORGANISATIONS

An annotated list of International interfaith organisations.

This section contains a list of international interfaith organisations, based initially on the organisations which, as part of the growing interfaith movement, met in Oxford in March 2001 to discuss more effective communication and cooperation between themselves under the coordination of the International Interfaith Centre in Oxford. Its website ([www.interfaith-center.org](http://www.interfaith-center.org)) is probably the best resourced and best linked data source in the world. Another site that is particularly useful is at [www.conjure.com/religion.html](http://www.conjure.com/religion.html), and has a very extensive series of links to religious resources under a whole range of headings. It is headed with the commitment 'Religions working for a better world'. Indeed, this site provides probably the most comprehensive guide to religions, organisations, publications and other resources available on the internet.

This listing is divided into two parts:

- (a) Key International Interfaith Organisations.
- (b) Other Interfaith and Associated Organisations and Websites.

It is not claimed that these listings are exhaustive—one limitation is that we have confined ourselves to the English language.

#### **a. Key international interfaith organisations**

Each of these following key organisations has its own individual origins, profile and mission, and they are independent of any one

faith community. Their details can be ascertained by navigating through each website and discerning its contents. They are listed in alphabetical order.

The first Parliament of the World's Religions was held in Chicago in 1893 in conjunction with the Columbian exposition. This Parliament marked the first formal world gathering of representatives of eastern and western spiritual traditions. However, it would be a hundred years before the second Parliament was held in 1993, again in Chicago. It resulted from the suggestion in 1988 of two monks from the local Vivekananda Vedanta Society. It produced the document, *Towards a Global Ethic: an Initial Declaration*. The vision of CPWR is for harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities, enriching their commitment and contribution to a just, peaceful and sustainable world. CPWR has set itself the mission to broaden and deepen inter-religious understanding and cooperation, bringing the inspiration and wisdom of the world's traditions to bear on critical issues.

The Council's work develops in four strongly inter-linked dimensions: (1) Parliament Event – scheduled about every five years, Barcelona in 2004 after Cape Town in 1999. (2) Global—foster the engagement of the world's religious and spiritual communities with other guiding institutions to address critical issues. (3) Chicago—foster a vital community-based, socially-engaged inter-religious movement. (4) Multi-Local—foster a network of vital community-based, socially-engaged inter-religious movements in metropolitan areas.

### **Interfaith Youth Core**

IFYC is a youth-driven, international interfaith organisation committed to nurturing a new generation of compassionate global leaders through programmes that integrate intercultural encounter, social action and interfaith reflection. Founded in June 1999 after the United Religions Initiative Summit a year earlier, the IFYC has initiated projects in Europe, the Middle East, North America, Southern Africa and South Asia. The IFYC is currently developing approaches to community-based interfaith work while also expanding and strengthening its international network of faith-based youth activists.

### **International Association for Religious Freedom**

IARF was founded in 1900 as an organisation to bring together people 'striving to unite Pure Religion and Perfect Liberty'. It has 104 affiliated member organisations in 33 countries and 13 national chapters, mostly in Asia, Europe and North America, as well as individual

members. The only Australian affiliate is the Australian Unitarian Association. The purpose of IARF is to work for freedom of religion and belief because it is a precious human right that potentially enables the best within our religious lives or in our search for truth or enlightenment, to flourish. It requires freedom from oppressive, outside interference or discrimination, mutual understanding, respect and the promotion of harmony (or at least tolerance) between religions and an essential accountability towards the rights of their own members and others. Encouraging interfaith dialogue and tolerance is part of the IARF agenda. IARF's strategic plan for 2001–07 has aimed to implement five different types of programmes specifically designed to enhance religious freedom.

### **International Council of Christians and Jews**

The International Council of Christians and Jews links into 38 Christian-Jewish organisations around the world and acts as the umbrella body. It is committed to fostering mutual respect and understanding between Christians and Jews around the world. The website contains articles, reviews, reports, official statements and study resources on Christian-Jewish relations. Its headquarters in Germany are located in the house where Martin Buber lived.

The International Interfaith Centre (IIC) was founded by the International Association for Religious Freedom, the World Congress of Faiths and Westminster College (Oxford), now Oxford Brookes University. It facilitates networking, encounter, education and research between religious and spiritual individuals, organisations and communities throughout the world. The IIC promotes international interfaith activity to: (a) create understanding and harmony between people of diverse faith traditions (b) identify positive models to support cooperation, peacebuilding and human rights (c) address global critical issues and (d) contribute to conflict transformation. The IIC initiates projects, conferences, seminars, publications and consultancies to further these aims and encourage the peaceful and harmonious engagement of religious and secular people in our world. IIC acts as coordinator of the International Interfaith Network.

### **Minorities of Europe**

Founded in 1995 as a result of the Council of Europe's campaign against racism, anti-semitism and intolerance, the Minorities of Europe (MoE) works towards the advancement of education, empowerment and civic participation of people, in particular of young people from

minority/disadvantaged communities, through promotion of positive intercultural relations throughout the community of Europe. Its remit is broader than interfaith activities. It pursues its activities in observance of the spirit of international conventions and covenants regarding human rights, minority rights, women's rights, and endeavours to overcome and prevent discrimination based on criteria such as cultural origin, nationality, religion, race, sexual orientation and socio-economic background.

### **Peace Council**

The Peace Council under the direction of its International Committee was founded in 1995 by a diverse group of eminent religious and spiritual individuals. Membership is by invitation. The Council works on the assumption that there is a spiritual dimension to all of life and that the world's religions have a wealth of insight, understanding, faith and hope to bring to bear in the world. In the face of conflict, injustice, poverty, discrimination and misuse of creation, the Peace Council frames its work in spiritual terms and strives to provide peaceful and constructive solutions in difficult situations. Its present initiatives include on-going work in Chiapas, Bangkok, Palestine/Israel, and the Korean Peninsula. Priorities for 2001-2002 have included Colombia, the Sudan, and Iraq.

The Tanenbaum Center was established in 1992 to continue the work of Rabbi Tanenbaum in the areas of inter-religious understanding, social justice and human rights, especially in addressing the theological roots of prejudice and the encouragement of religious beliefs that build mutual respect. As well as conducting conferences and publishing studies, it conducts diversity programmes for primary school children and has a Peacemakers in Action programme for religious leaders.

### **The Temple of Understanding (Tou)**

Founded in 1960 by Juliet Hollister and launched as a global interfaith organisation by Eleanor Roosevelt, is organised to promote understanding among the world's religions, to recognise the oneness of the human family and to achieve a 'spiritual United Nations'. Speakers at Spiritual Summit Conferences have included the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Mother Theresa and Thomas Merton. Videos and study guides of education programmes make interfaith understanding of religious and spiritual traditions available for a wider public. An NGO with ECOSOC Consultative Status, the Temple actively participates in UN Summits and interfaith celebrations of the UN. Chapters exist in India,

---

Argentina, Venezuela and the University of Maryland. Juliet Hollister Awards honour religious leaders, civil servants and artists whose work signals appreciation of the interfaith heritage of humanity.

### **United Religions Initiative (URI)**

Founded in 1995 in San Francisco, is a rapidly growing global community whose purpose is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously-motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings. The United Religions Initiative is a network of self-organising Cooperation Circles located on 5 continents and in more than 30 countries around the world. It is not represented in Australia. The community of Circles is sustained and strengthened by an effective communications and knowledge-sharing network, a vital and growing staffing presence in regions around the world, and focused support and organisational capacity-building in a wide range of areas including peacebuilding, resource-sharing and global fundraising.

Begun in 1961 by a group of world religious leaders with its First World Assembly in Kyoto in 1970, Religions for Peace is the largest international coalition bringing together leaders from the world's great religions who are dedicated to achieving peace. It is the principal religious organisation used by the UN secretary-general to interface with faith communities locally and regionally and globally. Respecting cultural differences while celebrating our common humanity, WCRP has networks in 51 countries, including Australia, to promote multifaith cooperation, improve living conditions and bring greater security to all the world's citizens. Working on an international, regional, and national basis, Religions for Peace helps religious communities unleash their enormous potential for common action, mobilising collaborative efforts to effect change in the areas of (1) Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation, (2) Human Rights, (3) Children and Families, (4) Development and Ecology, (5) Disarmament and Security, and (6) Peace Education. In recent years, it has been working on specific peace-building projects in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Indonesia, the Balkans and, since March 2002, in Iraq.

### **World Congress of Faiths:**

The World Congress of Faiths (WCF), convened by Sir Francis Younghusband (explorer and mystic) in 1936, is a pioneering fellowship dedicated to bringing people of different faith convictions together for mutual understanding, cooperation and dialogue. The Congress



sponsors the annual Younghusband Lecture, which is given by a prominent figure of spiritual or intellectual stature, and organises conferences, seminars, retreats and pilgrimages. WCF's journal, *World Faiths Encounter*, enjoys a high reputation for its good scholarship and accessible reading. The newsletter, *One Family*, keeps members in touch with people and events. Although support for WCF is concentrated mostly in the UK, its connections are global. A number of members are used as international speakers and have many publications to their name.

The Millenium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders (MPS) convened at the United Nations in August, 2000, brought together 1,200 delegates from 110 nations—the first such gathering of religious leaders in UN history. The Summit's goal was to build an interfaith alliance to strengthen the UN system by bringing world religious leaders into the peace process. The Summit's achievements include the signing of a Commitment to Global Peace by the assembled delegates and an agreement to explore the creation of an international religious council which would be available to the Secretary General and UN community worldwide. MPS engages religious leaders in global issues through partnerships with governments, business and civic leaders and initiatives in different regions. It has now evolved into the World Council of Religious Leaders and its launching took place in Bangkok in June, 2002 at Buddhathon and at UNESCAP.

### **World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD)**

Established in 1998 in a joint initiative between the President of the World Bank and the Archbishop of Canterbury, is an action-based dialogue among different religions of the world and between them and the multilateral development agencies (IMF, World Bank, UN agencies) on the subject of Poverty and Development. Up to now, the focus has been on an interfaith perspective on the nature of poverty, the relevance of religion and spirituality to development, and what the very aims and basic criteria of development should be. WFDD also has three country-based initiatives, in Tanzania on health policies, in Ethiopia on food security and other issues, and in Guatemala, where an interfaith group is working on a joint paper on the values which should underlie the development process.

The World Fellowship of Inter-Religious Councils (WFIRC) was founded in 1983 in India as a network of individuals, institutions and movements committed to interfaith dialogue at different levels. WFIRC



is committed to work for reconciliation in areas of communal tension, to value-education with special emphasis on spirituality and meditation, to interfaith education, to interfaith celebration, festivals etc. WFIRC organises international interfaith conferences and celebrations, and publishes a newsletter.

This listing contains many useful websites about specific national organisations or particular faith organisations. It also contains websites with interfaith resources such as the interfaith calendar and prayers for interfaith or data on the number of adherents of the different faiths around the world ([www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com)).

- **Association of Interfaith Ministers** [www.interfaithclergy.org/index.html](http://www.interfaithclergy.org/index.html)
- **Auburn Theological Seminary Centre for Multifaith Education** [www.auburnsem.org](http://www.auburnsem.org)
- **Belief Net** [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)
- **English Religious Resources (University of Virginia)**<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/relig.browse.html>
- **Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education** [www.csee.org](http://www.csee.org)
- **Global Ethic Foundation** [www.weltethos.org](http://www.weltethos.org)
- **Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival** [www.oneworld.org/globalforum/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/globalforum/index.html)
- **Global Network of Religions for Children** [www.gnrc.ne.jp](http://www.gnrc.ne.jp)
- **Interfaith Encounter Association** [www.interfaith-encounter.org](http://www.interfaith-encounter.org)
- **Interfaith Calendar Website** [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org)
- **Interfaith Voices for Peace and Justice** <http://origin.org/ifv.html>
- **Inter-religious Coordinating Council of Israel** [www.icci.co.il](http://www.icci.co.il)
- **JUST International Movement for a Just World** [www.just.international](http://www.just.international)
- **Monastic Inter-religious Dialog** [www.monasticdialog.com](http://www.monasticdialog.com)
- **North American Interfaith Network** [www.nain.org](http://www.nain.org)
- **Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue:** [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/interelg/](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/)
- **Rissho Kosei-kai** [www.rk-world.org](http://www.rk-world.org)
- **Sacred Texts** [www.sacred-texts.com](http://www.sacred-texts.com)
- **Thanksgiving Square** [www.thanksgiving.org](http://www.thanksgiving.org)
- **Three Faiths Forum** [www.threefaithsforum.org.uk](http://www.threefaithsforum.org.uk)

- 
- **World Council of Churches (Inter-religious Relations and Dialogue)** [www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/inter-religious/index-e.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/inter-religious/index-e.html)
  - **World Interfaith Education Association** [www.web.net/~wifeaont/](http://www.web.net/~wifeaont/)
  - **World Peace Prayer Society** [www.worldpeace.org](http://www.worldpeace.org)
  - **World Prayers** [www.worldprayers.org](http://www.worldprayers.org)
  - **World Scripture (United Communities of Spirit – Global Faiths Initiative)** <http://origin.org/>





## 53

**OTHER INITIATIVES AND INSTITUTIONS  
WORKING ON GUIDELINES FOR BETTER  
INTERFAITH RELATIONS**

---

---

**INTERFAITH RELATIONS AND THE CHURCHES**

A Policy Statement of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

*Developed by the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and adopted by the NCC General Assembly on November 10, 1999, this statement is the result of a four-year process of consultation with member communions and with NCCCUSA programme units, in particular the Faith and Order Commission and the Ecumenical Networks Commission, and the Black Church Liaison Committee. At a number of stages, representatives of other religious traditions also shared responses to the document, which have been helpful in its creation.*

This Statement provides policy guidelines for the National Council of Churches, and is offered for the consideration of its member communions as a source for guidance, reflection, and action. It is our hope as well that it will contribute to the wider discourse on religious diversity and community in our national life.

**1. Preamble**

2. "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). As disciples, we seek to testify to the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, to embody that love in the world, and to respond to the leading of God's Holy Spirit. We seek God's grace in our common effort to understand ever more fully how to live as the body of Christ in this religiously plural and culturally diverse time and place.

3. We speak out of a changing experience of religious diversity in our country. Events in the United States and across the world have made us more aware of the significance of the world's religions and their influence on politics, economics, and cultures. We speak out of what we have been learning in our shared ecumenical life. At home and abroad, the work of building Christian unity and our efforts for peace and human development are increasingly intertwined with questions regarding our relationships with those of religious traditions outside the historic Christian church.

#### 4. Historical, Political and Social Context.

5. The Americas have always been religiously plural. For millennia, their indigenous peoples have practiced their religions, diverse yet all based on respect for and connectedness with the earth and all of creation. Christians of various backgrounds made up the bulk of the settlers from Europe. But Jews were also among the original colonists and participated in the American Revolution. Muslims and practitioners of African religions arrived with those brought from Africa, most as slaves. Immigrants who came from Asia in the 19th century to work in American industry and agriculture brought with them a variety of Asian religious traditions.

6. The USA's history has not always been marked by tolerance or inclusivity. Religious liberty and freedom developed here only slowly, despite the protections of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Early visions of that freedom were (and unfortunately still are) often infected with triumphalism and racism. We must confess that Christians participated in attempts to eradicate indigenous peoples and their traditional religions. We must acknowledge the complicity of many of our churches in slavery, a system in which most African Americans were prohibited from practicing Islam or African traditional religions.

7. Today the spectrum of religious tradition and practice in the United States is wider and more complex than ever before. Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Native American traditions, Baha'i, and other faiths are now part of the American landscape. Many factors have contributed to this increased diversity. These include changes such as the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965 and subsequent immigration policy, increasing global inter-connections, the growth of American-born religious movements, and the increasing willingness of Americans to make religious commitments outside their tradition of birth.

8. This increased religious diversity is a result of the changed cultural and ethnic makeup of our communities and our churches. For many of our congregations, inter-religious and intercultural relations are an integral part of community and family life. Many church members have children, parents, sisters and brothers, spouses or other relatives who belong to another religious tradition. People of other faiths confront, as do many Christians, discrimination in access to housing, job opportunities, or political and social position. In their efforts to address community problems, provide hope for a better society, and work for justice, Christians find themselves working side-by-side with men and women who practice religions other than their own.

9. Interfaith relations also play a prominent role in our international concerns. In many parts of the world, religion plays an important role in politics, in economic and social development or the lack of it, in communal strife or reconciliation. We see the growth of fundamentalism among Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Hindus. We note the central role religion often plays in a community's understanding of justice, moral good, and its own identity, and we see the involvement of religion for good and for ill in the struggles in many places in the world. News reports often reinforce our stereotypes and provide an erroneous base of information from which many form lasting impressions of other religious traditions and those who practice them.

10. In our community institutions and in the public sphere, we increasingly face issues involving inter-religious understanding and cooperation. Too often, people of other faiths experience stereotyping based on both religious difference and ethnicity. The interpretation and implementation of religious freedom is a matter of lively debate. The National Council of Churches relates to other religious communities on a broad range of public policy issues and questions of fundamental social dignity. New voices and new issues are challenging traditional understandings of who and what we are as a people in the United States. The churches struggle to understand their relation to this diversity of views and people, taking their part in our society's current efforts to discern a new and more inclusive civic identity.

11. A Continuing Dimension of the Church's Life.

12. Although this situation in which we live may seem to be new, it has many parallels throughout biblical history. In the stories of the Hebrew Scriptures, God relates to the Jewish people against a backdrop of religious diversity. In early Christian writings, we see that Christianity originated as a Jewish movement often in tension with other Jewish



---

movements of the time. These tensions are often reflected in the Christian Scriptures. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus took place in one of the most religiously complex environments of the ancient world.

13. The Church of Christ has always lived among peoples of many different cultures and religions. Thus we join Christians of many times and places when we ask, How do we live in faithfulness to the Gospel when our friends and neighbors, colleagues and associates, parents and children are members of other religious traditions or no religion at all?

14. Interfaith relations and the challenge of ministry in a religiously plural world raise a number of ecumenical questions. Some questions divide the churches in terms of theology, or practice, or a mixture of the two. These include the relationship between evangelism and dialogue, concerns about intermarriage, and issues regarding interfaith worship or common prayer. These issues warrant further consultation among the churches. As we become increasingly aware that the whole Church of Christ stands together in a common ministry in relation to men and women of other religions, these questions become more urgent.

15. There are two aspects to this challenge. Theologically, as a fellowship of Christian communions, we ask new questions about our religious identity: How do we understand our relationship to God, to other Christians, and to those of other religious traditions? How do we understand the relationship between these men and women and God? Practically, we ask about Christian discipleship: How can we best live a life of faithful witness and service in a multi-faith context?

16. Reflections on Theology and Practice.

17. We are indebted to the efforts of Christians from many different confessional traditions and ecumenical bodies who have struggled with these questions. We are instructed by the thinking of the Second Vatican Council, in particular its document *Nostra Aetate* (1965) and subsequent reflections, and the attention given to this issue by bodies such as the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Our efforts to think and work together in this area of interfaith relations as the National Council of Churches owe much also to the pioneering work of the World Council of Churches. In its *Guidelines on Dialogue* (1979, #12) that body noted that its member churches "will need to work out for themselves and with their specific partners in dialogue statements and guidelines for their own use in particular situations."

18. Some member churches of the NCCC have developed policies or study documents on interfaith relations or on specific bilateral inter-religious relationships. The Faith and Order Commission of the NCCC has studied those elements within particular confessional traditions which might inform their theological understanding of our relations with other religious traditions. In addition, the Ecumenical Networks Commission and many of the member churches maintain ties with local and regional ecumenical and inter-religious councils. Some member communions also have ties to national and international multi-religious efforts. Christians take part in many inter-religious efforts of social ministry and advocacy. We are grateful for, and indebted to all of this work.

19. God and Human Community.

20. Understanding the churches' relationship to people of other religious traditions begins in the recognition of God's many gifts to us, including that of relationship. All are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). When we meet a human being, no matter what her or his religion, we are meeting a unique creation of the living God. "One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live on all the face of the earth." All are equal in God's sight; each is equally the object of God's love and potentially open to receive "a ray of that truth which enlightens all [humanity]." Because we are all children of the one God we are all related to one another. It is in this sense that we may call all men and women our brothers and sisters. (We also recognise a specific use of this familial language to refer to those within the household of Christian faith.) Community is itself a divine gift which we are called to make real in our lives.

21. In our Christian understanding, relationship is part of the nature of God. In God's own essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in dynamic interrelationship, a unity of three in one. Similarly, humanity is created in diversity. In the scriptural account of creation, it is the first humans in community who together constitute the image of God. Being made in God's image we are created to live a life of relationship, and called to claim the unity in our human diversity.

22. We recognize, however, that though we are given this gift of community, we act in ways that break or undermine it. Too often we set ourselves against each other. We become separated from God, and alienated from God's creation. We find ourselves in seemingly irreconcilable conflict with other people. We confess that as human

---

beings we have a propensity for taking the gift of diversity and turning it into a cause of disunity, antagonism and hatred—often because we see ourselves as part of a unique, special community. We sin against God and each other.

23. This is part of the reality of our human condition. We see it in the ease with which our father Adam accuses our mother Eve: “The woman you gave me for a companion, she gave me the fruit” (Genesis 3:12). Within a generation, the vision of the community for which we are created had become so distorted that Cain can challenge God with the question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9).

24. Scripture suggests that our responsibility extends not only to a brother or sister, but also to the stranger. Hebrew Scripture celebrates the wider community to which humanity is called in the stories of Melchizedek, Jethro, Rahab and Ruth, and the Hittites who offered hospitality to Abraham. In the Torah God enjoins the Jewish people to treat the sojourner as part of their own community. Throughout the Bible, hospitality to the stranger is an essential virtue. We recall both the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it,” and the example Jesus gives in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37).

25. In the churches’ long history with people of other religions, as we have struggled to make actual God’s gift of community, we have acted both faithfully and unfaithfully. While Christians have suffered persecution at the hands of those of other faiths and from each other, we have much to repent. Christians have persecuted Jews, and crusaded against Muslims. Christians have enslaved Africans and other peoples, and have participated in subordinating indigenous peoples and erasing their religious traditions. Many Christians have accepted or perpetuated the use of their religion to bless the imposition of Western culture and economic domination. Anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim biases, together with racism and ethnic biases have flourished among us.

26. We can rejoice that Christians were leaders in the anti-slavery movement, and have worked for the human and communal rights of many peoples. Christians have fought oppressive economic and social systems of many societies including our own, and have resisted injustice without regard to cost. Christians also have invited transformation of those ways of living that damage others and undermine the one human community. In many of these efforts Christians have worked closely with people of other faiths.

27. Our experience, therefore, is a mixture of successes and failures in building loving community and in exercising our stewardship of God's creation in justice and peace. We must struggle to reject or reform all those human actions and systems that destroy or deny the image of God in human beings or that tear down the structures of human community. On the other hand, we must seek to affirm all human impulses which build up true community.

28. Because God is at work in all creation, we can expect to find new understanding of our faith through dialogue with people of other religions. Such interaction can be an opportunity for mutual witness. However, mutual witness does not always take place in a context of mutual respect. We may fail in our efforts to reflect God's love for all; and even on those occasions when we succeed in the practice of a respectful presence, we do not always find our success mirrored by our conversation partners.

29. We find ourselves in need of repentance and reconciliation. Again and again we are reminded "of the Christian Church as a sign at once of people's need for fuller and deeper community, and of God's promise of a restored human community in Christ." As we wait for the fulfillment of God's promise, we commit ourselves to work for fuller and deeper community in our own time and place.

### 30. Jesus Christ and Reconciliation.

31. The revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ is the center of our faith. Incarnating both the fullness of God and the fullness of humanity, Jesus Christ initiates a new creation, a world unified in relationship as God originally intended. We believe that Jesus Christ makes real God's will for a life of loving community with God, with the whole human family and with all creation. Through Jesus Christ, Christians believe God offers reconciliation to all. "In Christ God was reconciling the world to [God]self" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

32. It is our Christian conviction that reconciliation among people and with the world cannot be separated from the reconciliation offered in Jesus Christ. Jesus, addressing the crowds and the disciples on the mountain (Matthew 5:1 and 7:28), teaches that any who would offer their gift at God's altar, must first be reconciled to their brothers and sisters in the human family (Matthew 5:24). The hope of a cosmic reconciliation in Christ is also central to Christian scripture: "The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the Children of God" (Romans 8:21).

33. Jesus Christ is also the focus of the most vexing questions regarding how Christians understand their relationship with men and women of other religions. Christians agree that Jesus Christ incarnated—and incarnates still—the inexhaustible love and salvation that reconcile us all. We agree that it is not by any merit of our own, but by God’s grace that we are reconciled. Likewise, Christians also agree that our discipleship impels us to become reconciled to the whole human family and to live in proper relationship to all of God’s creation. We disagree, however, on whether non-Christians may be reconciled to God, and if so, how. Many Christians see no possibility of reconciliation with God apart from a conscious acceptance of Jesus Christ as incarnate Son of God and personal savior. For others, the reconciling work of Jesus is salvific in its own right, independent of any particular human response. For many, the saving power of God is understood as a mystery and an expression of God’s sovereignty that cannot be confined within our limited conceptions. One question with which we must still struggle is how to define the uniqueness of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ in the light of such passages as “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6); “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12); “In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things” (Colossians 1:19-20); and “as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

34. As Christians we recognise that Jesus is not central to other religious traditions. For men and women in other communities, the mystery of God takes many forms. Observing this, we are not led to deny the centrality of Christ for our faith, but to contemplate more deeply the meaning of St. Paul’s affirmation: “Ever since the creation of the world, (God’s) eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things [God] has made” (Romans 1:20). Christians disagree on the nature and extent of such “natural revelation” and its relation to salvation. No matter what our view on this may be, we can be open to the insights of others.

35. We recognise that scripture speaks with many voices about relationship with men and women of other religious traditions. We need to devote further attention to issues of interpreting scriptural teaching. But as to our Christian discipleship, we can only live by the



clear obligation of the Gospel. When Jesus was asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he, referring to his Jewish tradition, answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:25-27). Love of God and love of neighbors cannot be separated. We rejoice in our common conviction that Jesus calls us to ministries of reconciliation.

**36. The Spirit of God and Human Hope.**

**37.** The presence and power of the Holy Spirit fill us with hope. The realities of religious fragmentation and conflict could become a cause of despair, especially in a world of broken community, racked by division and hate based on colour, language, ethnicity, and class. We are pained when our religious traditions do not empower us to build community. Yet we have hope because of the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters when the earth was void and without form (Genesis 1:2), who brings order out of chaos, and can reshape our warped societies.

**38.** We believe that our relationships with people of other religious traditions are being shaped by the Spirit who, like the wind, "blows where it chooses" (John 3:8). Though we do not always understand the Spirit's purposes, we need never be without hope, for neither we nor the rest of creation are ever without the Spirit of God.

**39.** In this time of constant change, a sometimes bewildering variety of technologies, cultures, religions and languages impinges upon our lives. The ways in which we should witness and act to bring about reconciliation in our torn world are not always clear. But the Spirit enables us to discern how to nurture the loving community of persons which is God's intention for creation, and gives us the strength to keep working toward it.

**40.** Our experience of the transforming power of God's love overflows in joyous anticipation of a renewed and reconciled humanity. As the Body of Christ, we are called to live out this new reality and to be a sign of the restored community to which all people are called. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we witness in word and deed to this hope.

**41.** This witness will be as varied as the many circumstances in which we meet men and women of other faiths. We meet them in our families and among our friends and colleagues; at the corner store and the doctor's office, in community action groups, and at work. We



---

meet in boardrooms and schoolrooms, facing common agendas and concerns. Since God is the Lord of history, we can be open to the presence of God's Spirit in these encounters. They invite us to faithful service and witness.

42. We are aware that our churches are part of the body of Christ throughout the world. Our encounters with people of other faiths here in the U.S. are informed by the experience and reflection of our sisters and brothers living among men and women of many religious traditions in many nations. We stand in solidarity with each other, taking a role in international dialogue and seeking in our own circumstances to be faithful to the gospel.

43. We do not always agree, however, on how best to love our neighbors. Commitment to justice and mutual respect is the paramount consideration for some. For them the practice of Christian love is the most powerful witness to the truth of the Gospel. Others, while not denying the witness of faithful lives, believe that love demands the verbal proclamation of the Gospel and an open invitation to all people to be reconciled to God in Christ. Still others understand evangelization as our participation in God's transformation of human society. As we seek to respond to God's call to love our neighbor, we all must seek to avoid ways of interaction which do violence to the integrity of human persons and communities, such as coercive proselytism, which "violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters." We pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that through our life with all men and women, of every religion, colour, language, and class, we will be instruments of God to build that time in which "steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10).

44. Clearly, a basic aspect of our relationship to people of religious traditions other than our own must be to engage in the struggle for justice, as the prophet Amos challenges us: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:23-24). Our actions must be based on genuine respect for all men and women. "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy" (James 3:16-17). And beyond respect, we are called to love all people so that, by the working of the Holy Spirit, we may "above all, clothe [our]selves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).

**45. Marks of Faithfulness.**

**46.** In the light of our reflections on Christian discipleship, we can discern ways to approach the challenges of our multi-religious society. We will serve faithfully, meeting others with open hearts and minds.

**47.** All relationship begins with meeting. The model for our meeting others is always the depth of presence and engagement which marked Jesus' meeting with those around him. In our everyday lives, we will meet and form relationships with men and women of other religious traditions. At times these may be difficult relationships, based on bitter memories. However, we have been created for loving community and will not disengage from trying to build bridges of understanding and cooperation throughout the human family.

**48.** True relationship involves risk. When we approach others with an open heart, it is possible that we may be hurt. When we encounter others with an open mind, we may have to change our positions or give up certainty, but we may gain new insights. Prompted to ask new questions, we will search the Scriptures and be attentive to the Spirit in new ways to mature in Christ and in love and service to others. Because those we meet are also God's beloved creatures, this risk is also opportunity. Our knowledge and love of God can be enriched as we hear others proclaim to us how God has worked and empowered their lives.

**49.** True relationship respects the other's identity. We will meet others as they are, in their particular hopes, ideas, struggles and joys. These are articulated through their own traditions, practices and world-views. We encounter the image of God in the particularity of another person's life.

**50.** True relationship is based on integrity. If we meet others as they are, then we must accept their right to determine and define their own identity. We also must remain faithful to who we are; only as Christians can we be present with integrity. We will not ask others to betray their religious commitments, nor will we betray our commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**51.** True relationship is rooted in accountability and respect. We approach others in humility, not arrogance. In our relationships we will call ourselves and our partners to a mutual accountability. We will invite each other to join in building a world of love and justice, but we will also challenge each other's unjust behaviour. We can do both only from an attitude of mutual respect.

52. True relationship offers an opportunity to serve. Jesus comes among us as a servant. We too are given the opportunity to serve others, in response to God's love for us. In so doing, we will join with those of other religious traditions to serve the whole of God's creation. Through advocacy, education, direct services and community development, we respond to the realities of a world in need. Our joining with others in such service can be an eloquent proclamation of what it means to be in Christ.

### **Recommendations**

In response to the situation of religious plurality in which our churches minister, in light of the convictions expressed above, and in order to live out our faith commitment more fully, we, the General Assembly of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States, affirm the following guidelines and recommendations.

#### **I. In regard to the life and programmes of the Council: We commit the Council to continue its relationships with people of other religious traditions. In particular the Council should:**

1. Maintain relations with national bodies of other religious communities in the United States, in order to foster mutual understanding and regard, examine issues affecting our communities in the course of our national life, and identify common concerns and appropriate coordinated responses to them;

2. Initiate conversations with people and organisations of other religious traditions in the United States, for example, the Hindu and Sikh communities, and others;

3. Continue to encourage dialogue with Americans of other religions to promote peace and justice around the globe, and in particular with American Jews and Muslims as integral to the churches' efforts for peace in the Middle East (Policy Statement on the Middle East, Nov. 6, 1980); and to encourage inter-religious dialogue in other situations in which religion is identified as a factor in conflict situations;

4. Reinvigorate ongoing work with institutions and people of other religions and cultures in public policy advocacy; refugee resettlement and overseas programmes; the prevention of family violence and abuse (Policy Statement on Family Violence and Abuse, November 14, 1990); and to initiate work in other programme areas as appropriate;

5. Encourage the efforts of existing inter-religious entities within the life of the Council, such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate

Responsibility, the Interfaith Broadcasting Committee, and the Task Force on Religious Liberty;

6. Continue to work through collaborative bodies, including the Washington Interfaith Staff Committee, the U.S. Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and the North American Interfaith Network;

7. Participate in international efforts to further inter-religious relations, especially through the World Council of Churches, and organisations such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace;

8. Affirm that the integrity of our Christian faith and commitment is to be preserved in all our interfaith relationships, and recognise that religious commitments of many traditions, like the Christian, have political implications of which we should be aware. We should recognise and consider the political aspects of the others' religious claims, and be ready to explain the religious roots of our own behaviour and policies;

9. Recommit ourselves to pursue religious liberty and religious freedom for all, and to defend "the rights and liberties of cultural, racial and religious minorities" (Religion and Civil Liberties in the U.S.A., October 5, 1955); and call again for "interfaith dialogue on the nature and meaning of human rights" and on "the patterns of inter-religious intolerance and practices that lead to interfaith conflict" (Human Rights, Nov. 12, 1994), including both intolerance toward Christians and Christian intolerance of others;

10. Condemn all forms of religious, ethnic and racial bias, especially anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-Asian and anti-Native American bias, and other forms of sinful bigotry which turn religious differences into excuses for defamation, stereotyping and violence; and defend their victims (cf. Resolution on Prejudice Against Islam and Muslims, November 6, 1986); and commit the Council and our churches to uproot all that might contribute to such prejudice in our teaching, life and ministries;

11. Continue our efforts to achieve mutuality of understanding and growth toward maturity in relation to Native American people, so that the spiritual heritage, political reality and cultural uniqueness of each group or nation may be respected (Indian Affairs, November 4, 1978); and promote the protection of sacred sites and rituals;

12. Recommit ourselves to the development in public schools of "an intelligent understanding and appreciation of the role of religion

---

in the life of the people of this nation," while also defending the principle that "neither the church nor the state should use the public school to compel acceptance of any creed or conformity to any specific religious practice" (The Churches and the Public Schools, June 7, 1963);

**II. We charge the Council, through its Executive Board, to give priority to interfaith relations in order to:**

1. Work with the churches to identify or create study resources, organise and facilitate consultations and educational conferences, offer workshops, etc.;

2. Gather information on existing programmes, activities, and relationships on national, regional, and local levels;

3. Promote and participate regularly in bilateral and multilateral consultations with other religious communities to explore practical and theological concerns;

4. Coordinate the Council's interfaith work, and report to the NCCC General Assembly at least biennially.

**III. In service to each other as a community of communions:**

We call on member communions to work together, and with the broader ecumenical community, to equip congregations and Christian leaders to understand and engage with people of other religious traditions, and in particular to:

1. Provide study resources, sponsoring consultations, and organising conferences to further this aim;

2. Participate in the Interfaith Relations Commission, a forum in which the churches may take counsel, make plans, and undertake joint work in this field;

3. Engage in inter-religious relations ecumenically whenever and wherever possible, and share these experiences with each other, the Council, and partner churches and ecumenical bodies around the world.

**IV. To member communions and their congregations, to the wider ecumenical community, and to all those of goodwill who seek further understanding or participation in interfaith relations, we:**

1. Recommend study and use of the World Council of Churches' *Guidelines on Dialogue* (1979), the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council (1965), and other statements of the churches. These documents offer theological insights and practical suggestions that



can undergird efforts to understand and properly engage with people of other religious traditions.

2. Call attention to the statements of our member communions and of the wider Christian community regarding inter-religious relations.

3. Recommend ecumenical consideration and study of our divided understandings of the nature of salvation, of appropriate forms of evangelism, of the bases in scripture and tradition for relations with those of other religious traditions, and of the concerns among us regarding interfaith marriage, worship and prayer.

4. Urge member communions, their congregations, and local ecumenical and interfaith gatherings to use the "Marks of Faithfulness" in this policy statement as a statement of commitment for study and affirmation.

5. Commend this policy statement to member communions, congregations and local ecumenical and inter-religious gatherings for study, and as a catalyst to reflection and action.

6. Commend this policy statement to other religious communities in the United States for their study, and invite their reactions to it in the hope and expectation of deepening friendship.

### **Open House a Success**

Hallelujah! We are in our new home and the celebration last Thursday was a wonderful success with somewhere between 150 – 200 people in attendance. If you did not get a chance to join us, please stop by for your own private tour. The love and support we have received through your constant prayers is evident in the fruits of many persons labour. We are eternally grateful for you and your support.

As we continue learning to live in our new surroundings and as we continue to count the donations and pledges that come in through the end of this month, we ask that you continue to pray for smooth sailing.

### **Results from Interfaith Night at El Chico**

Great news! We had 297 people sign the list at El Chico Tuesday night, and our check will be \$365! They were thrilled to have so many customers, because Tuesday is usually a slow night. What a great way to raise some funds!



Interfaith is a private non-profit ministry supported by persons of many fiaths from over 50 member congregations along with many others. IMI also receives support from individuals, civic organisations, schools, local businesses, corporations and foundations. Through Interfaith Ministries all supporters are able to **“Join Hands to Serve Others.”**

### **IMI Mission Statement**

Interfaith Ministries is a united effort of the religious community to show God’s love. We respond to those in need through advocacy and coordination of community resources.

### **History**

Interfaith Ministries’ history started on April 10, 1979, when an enormous tornado devastated Wichita Falls and flattened 1/5 of the town. Thousands of people were homeless and hurting. Church World Service, an arm of the National Council of Churches, sent representatives to the city to organise a response from the religious community, and Interfaith Disaster Service (IDS) was the vehicle created to help families unable to finance the rebuilding of their homes. Congregations of all denominations and different faiths banded together to rebuild homes and lives. This was a “first” for our city, as congregations had not previously cooperated for any purpose across denominational and faith lines.

IDS funneled monies from major religious groups and federal disaster funds to feed, house, and direct the work of volunteers from across the nation and Canada. By October 1981 the work of IDS was finished, but those who had worked side by side through the past one and one-half years did not want this cooperative spirit to die. They looked for another avenue by which their efforts could be channeled to improve the lives of Wichitans. The decision was made to open an emergency center for families whose lives had been devastated by medical emergencies, loss of employment, or other financial crises.

Twenty-five churches pledged to support Interfaith Ministries, Inc. (IMI), as the new organisation was named. Their purpose was to eliminate families going from congregation to congregation to ask for food and financial assistance. Having a central location supported by many congregations enabled resources to be pooled, eliminated duplication of effort and assistance, and saved families a lot of time and frustration trying to find help. IMI member congregations can

refer families to the Center, joining their financial and food contributions with the others to help more people in a more efficient manner. Congregation staff and volunteers can then choose the times that are convenient for them to work at the center.

Member congregations are asked to support IMI in three ways:

1. Food for the pantry
2. Financial contributions
3. Volunteers

Four staff members, three full-time and one part-time, supervise the activities of approximately 175 volunteers. These dedicated individuals serve on the Board, interview clients, administer the Prescription Project, answer phones, do office work, sort and package food in the pantry, provide interpretation for non-English speaking persons, and give loving support and information to hurting people. The material assistance provided may only help temporarily with the problem, but the emotional and spiritual support offered can make a real difference in a person's perspective during a crisis situation.

Fifty-six congregations have made a written commitment to support the work of IMI. Another 13 congregations lend a helping hand as well, making a total of 69 congregations that give time, talents, financial, and pantry donations making possible the outreach ministry of IMI. Individuals, local foundations, businesses, civic groups and other organisations also provide resources necessary to help nearly 3,000 families with over \$230,000 in direct financial assistance each year and nearly 2000 individuals with pantry assistance of 25 tonnes annually. In addition to these resources, the ministry of IMI is made possible because of the willingness of the volunteers to freely give just over 7000 hours of their time and talents. IMI is truly a local, non-United Way, effort that takes care of our Wichita Falls residents in need.

### **HISTORY OF INTERFAITH CARING MINISTERIES**

Interfaith Caring Ministries is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organisation that has been providing vital services to our neighbors in need since 1985. Over two decades ago a group of churches recognised the need for an alliance that would allow us to screen clients for need and offer services on a consistent basis to clients. Interfaith Caring Ministries screens each client for eligibility and provides programmes to individuals in a kind, caring and respectful manner. Our services include helping clients in need with both emergency services and programmes striving

to lead our clients to self-sufficiency. A few of the emergency services we provide include financial assistance to help pay rent or utilities, providing groceries through the ICM Food Pantry to those who are hungry and referrals to area agencies who provide services beyond the our scope of our mission. Some of our other programmes include a health outreach programme , children’s services , employment preparation, ICM Resale Shop and services to senior citizens. Please click here to see our current “Facts Sheet” for a listing of all our programmes.

We are extremely proud we are considered one of the leading non-profit organisations in the Clear Lake and League City area. We have received the following recognitions:

- Has received a 4 star rating (out of 5) on Guidestar – a nationwide rating system for non-profit organisations. (<http://www.guidestar.org/>)
- ICM meets the Better Bureau of Houston’s “Standards of Chraitable Accountability.” <http://www.data.bbb.org/houston/charities.html>
- Has received the highest 4-star rating (out of 4) for sound fiscal management from the Charity Navigator. (<http://www.charitynavigator.org/>)

### **Our Service Area**

Our basic service area includes both southern Harris County and northern Galveston County; however, during times of regional emergencies (see **Emergency Preparation**) we will provide services to other areas. As with most “assistance ministries” we provide services to clients who live within our zip code range. These include 77058, 77059, 77062, 77565, 77573, 77586, and 77598. In addition we serve zip codes 77089 and 77546, if within the Clear Creek School District and 77518 and 77539 by referral.

### **Our Statistics**

Each year Interfaith Caring Ministries provides services to over 3,000 families within our service area. For a list of annual statistics of the services we have provided, please click below to view Interfaith Caring Ministries’ Annual Reports.

### **Our Current Information**

For interesting articles on current events and programmes at Interfaith Caring Ministries, please click below to check out our latest newsletters.

## **Supporters**

Anticipated gross income for the FY July1, 2006-June 30, 2007 is expected to come from the following sources:

Businesses 1.00 per cent, Churches 6.00 per cent, Grants 25.00 per cent, Individuals 6.00 per cent, Organisations 2.00 per cent, Other 1.00 per cent, Resale Shop Gross Sales 45.00 per cent, Special Events 13.00 per cent.

## **OUR NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Nationality and ethnic origin, age, religion, sex, marital status, veteran's status, sexual orientation, physical limitations and familial status to all the rights and privileges, programmes and activities generally accorded or made available to any individual.

ICM does not discriminate with regard to race, national and ethnic origin. From time to time, ICM gathers data showing the break-down of various ethnic groups receiving our services. This information provides data submitted to state and national government agencies to implement specialised programmes. The use of this data does not imply racial discrimination. ICM does not discriminate with regard to culture. ICM strives to educate its professional staff and volunteers in the various cultures of the people who seek its services. The staff and volunteers strive for objectivity in dealing with people from a plurality of cultural backgrounds.

ICM does not discriminate with regard to religion. A multiplicity of religious beliefs and expressions may be found in the numerous people served by this ministry. Financial assistance to clients is based on objective criteria that has nothing to do with religious beliefs. All ICM staff and volunteers will treat each staff member, volunteer and client with an open perspective and respect due to each human being, regardless of their economic status or any other identifying characteristic.

## **"GIVING A HAND UP, RATHER THAN A HAND OUT"**

### **MISSION**

Interfaith Caring Ministries' mission is to serve our community by providing assistance leading to a path of self-sufficiency.

### **VISION**

Interfaith Caring Ministries' vision is to be recognised as the region's leading faith-based partner for family and individual support services in their times of need.

## VALUES

Interfaith Caring Ministries acknowledges that we have received God's abundant love, forgiveness, and healing which enable us to offer care to others. We seek to offer this care in the spirit of kindness, respect, confidentiality, and hope. We believe that in sharing God's gifts, we are making known God's presence in the world.

*Consequently, our services and support for all individuals are based on a shared set of core values. These values guide our decisions, our services, and our operations.*

### **Compassion**

We demonstrate compassion toward others in all our interactions. Our compassion is manifest in our ability to listen well, to exhibit patience and humility, to act wisely, and to serve others justly and fully.

### *Integrity*

We will act with integrity, based on moral soundness, honesty, ethical behaviour toward others, and openness to the needs of those we serve.

### *Respect*

We respect one another, treating others as we would want to be treated: fairly, honorably, equally, lovingly, and with dignity.

### *Self-Esteem*

We strive to enhance the self-esteem of all people, through our individual actions and attitudes and through our organisation's programmes and processes. We are dedicated to enriching the lives of others in ways that encourage self-sufficiency.

### *Self-Reliance*

We aspire to self-reliance for our clients, building on their capabilities, judgment and other qualities to achieve a sense of independence and self-sufficiency.

### *Spirituality*

We are faith-based, and we celebrate the spiritual qualities that have brought us together as an interfaith ministry.

### *Accountability*

We are responsible for our actions, and we are committed to enhancing our activities through strong stewardship, ethical behaviour and personal responsibility.

*Donate to ICM*

There are many ways to donate to Interfaith Caring Ministries.

*Mission*

Interfaith Caring Ministries (ICM) has been providing vital services to our neighbors in need since 1985. Interfaith Caring Ministries' mission is to serve our community by providing assistance leading to a path of self-sufficiency. Interfaith Caring Ministries' vision is to be recognised as the region's leading faith-based partner for family and individual support services in their times of need. A few of the emergency services we provide include financial assistance to help pay rent or utilities, providing groceries through the ICM Food Pantry to those who are hungry and referrals to area agencies who provide services beyond the our scope of our mission. Some of our other programmes include a health outreach programme, children's services, employment preparation, ICM Resale Shop and services to senior citizens.

## **PATHWAYS INTERFAITH MINISTRIES**

I. INTERFAITH CHAPLAINCY. Chaplaincy services are provided at a multi-level services Senior Residence Apartment Building and Skilled Nursing Facility. We provide worship and pastoral care services. Rev. Rice is an Interfaith Chaplain, with studies in Clinical Pastoral Education at UC Davis Medical Center.

II. We sponsor and mentor EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY, a programme of theological education by extension by The School of Theology, University of the South, of Sewanee, TN. <http://www.sewanee.edu/EFM/EFMhome.html>

III. We present a portable canvas replica of the Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth to religious and civic groups in the Sacramento Valley, and we sponsor a monthly Open Walk at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Sacramento, CA, the third Friday of each month and every New Year's Eve.

Labyrinths date back at least 4,000 years. They are found in many religious traditions and in various forms around the world. The Labyrinth is a metaphor for our spiritual journey through life, reminding us that life is a process in which we seek healing and wholeness. It speaks to us as, not only human beings on a spiritual path, but also as Spiritual Beings on a human path! It is a universal symbol with specific reflections in the Jewish Kabbala-Tree of Life, the Buddhist Walking Meditation, the Hindu Mandala, the Native American Hopi Medicine



---

Wheel, and the Christian and Islamic Pilgrimages. So also, PATHWAYS INTERFAITH MINISTRIES seeks to support all persons in the search for healing and wholeness.

We are affiliated with THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CHURCHES, (ICCC), of Frankfort, Illinois.

From the Association of Interfaith Ministers:

“What is Interfaith? Interfaith is a bridge...that allows members of all religions and spiritual teachings to reach out across the waters of life, in understanding and communication with each other. Interfaith affirms and supports the underlying goodness of each person, the healing of our planet.

Interfaith does not seek to homogenize religious differences. Rather, it honours the sacredness of each faith, and then creates ways by which the many paths can meet on common ground or unite in a new and sacred creative form... Differences between various religions and philosophies need not divide and separate, but can instead enrich our lives and deepen our capacity to love.”

## **FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION (FOR)**

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Fellowship of Reconciliation is composed of women and men who recognise the essential unity of all creation and have joined together to explore the power of love and truth for resolving human conflict. While it has always been vigorous in its opposition to war, the Fellowship has insisted equally that this effort must be based on a commitment to the achieving of a just and peaceful world community, with full dignity and freedom for every human being.

In working out these objectives the FOR seeks the company of people of faith who will respond to conflict non-violently, seeking reconciliation through compassionate action. The Fellowship encourages the integration of faith into the lives of individual members. At the same time it is a special role of the Fellowship to extend the boundaries of community and affirm its diversity of religious traditions as it seeks the resolution of conflict by the united efforts of people of many faiths.

In the development of its programme the FOR depends upon persons who seek to apply these principles to every area of life. FOR members:

- Identify with those of every nation, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion who are the victims of injustice and

exploitation, and seek to develop resources of active non-violence to transform such circumstances;

- Refuse to participate in any war or to sanction military preparations; work to abolish war and promote goodwill among races, nations and classes;
- Strive to build a social order that will utilise the resources of human ingenuity and wisdom for the benefit of all, an order in which no individual or group will be exploited or oppressed for the profit or pleasure of others;
- Advocate fair and compassionate methods of dealing with offenders against society; they also serve as advocates for victims of crime and their families who suffer loss and emotional anguish, recognising that restitution and reconciliation can help to heal both victims and offenders;
- Endeavor to show respect for personality and reverence for all creation;
- Seek to avoid bitterness and contention in dealing with controversy, and to maintain the spirit of self-giving love while engaged in the effort to achieve these purposes.

## **VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS**

FOR's Vision: We envision a world of justice, peace, and freedom. It is a revolutionary vision of a beloved community where differences are respected, conflicts are addressed non-violently, oppressive structures are dismantled, and where people live in harmony with the earth, nurtured by diverse spiritual traditions that foster compassion, solidarity, and reconciliation.

FOR's Mission: FOR seeks to replace violence, war, racism, and economic injustice with non-violence, peace, and justice. We are an interfaith organisation committed to active non-violence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change. We educate, train, build coalitions, and engage in non-violent and compassionate actions locally, nationally, and globally.

Since 1915, The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) has carried on programmes and educational projects concerned with domestic and international peace and justice, non-violent alternatives to conflict, and the rights of conscience. A Non-violent, Interfaith, tax exempt organisation, The FOR promotes non-violence and has members from many religious and ethnic traditions. It is a part of the International

---

Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), which has affiliates in over 40 countries.

## **HISTORY AND SUPPORTERS**

### **Founding of the Fellowship**

In 1914, an ecumenical conference was held in Switzerland by Christians seeking to prevent the outbreak of war in Europe. Before the conference ended, however, World War I had started and those present had to return to their respective countries. At a railroad station in Germany, two of the participants, Henry Hodgkin, an English Quaker, and Friedrich Sigmund-Schultze, a German Lutheran, pledged to find a way of working for peace even though their countries were at war. Out of this pledge Christians gathered in Cambridge, England in December 1914 to found the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The FOR-USA was founded one year later, in 1915.

FOR has since become an interfaith and international movement with branches and groups in over 40 countries and on every continent. Today the membership of FOR includes Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and people of other faith traditions, as well as those with no formal religious affiliation.

### **FOR's History—Some Highlights**

- 1916-1917: Helps organise the National Civil Liberties Bureau, now the ACLU. Supports World War I conscientious objectors (CO) and contributes to legal recognition of CO rights.
- 1920s: Helps organise the National Conference of Christians and Jews (now the National Conference on Community and Justice). Sends a peace delegation to meet Sandino in Nicaragua.
- 1930s: Works to strengthen the labour movement in it's drive to secure better working conditions. Sponsors Ambassadors of Reconciliation to visit world leaders.
- 1940s: Encourages non-violent resistance to World War II. Leads the struggle against internment of Japanese Americans. European FOR members rescue Jews and other political refugees fleeing Nazism. Sponsors an interracial team on the first "freedom ride" to test court decision outlawing discrimination in interstate travel. Organises extensive campaign to prevent the Pentagon from extending wartime conscription into universal military training.
- 1950s: Helps organise the American Committee on Africa (now part of Africa Action) to support the movements for African

independence. Conducts six-year Food for China programme in response to Chinese famines. FOR staff work with Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Montgomery bus boycott, and hold workshops in non-violence throughout the South. Produces a full-colour comic book, *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*, that sells over 250,000 copies.

- 1960s: Launches Shelters for the Shelterless, building real shelters for homeless people, in response to increasing public demand for fallout shelters. Makes contact with Vietnamese Buddhist pacifist movement and sponsors world tour by Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh. Forms International Committee of Conscience on Vietnam with 10,000 clergy in 40 countries. Raises money for medical aid for both sides in Vietnam.
- 1970s: Founds *Dai Dong*, a transnational project linking war, environmental problems, poverty and other social issues, involving thousands of scientists around the world. Seeks to reverse the Cold War and the arms race with campaigns, marches, educational projects and civil disobedience. Opposes death penalty in concerted campaign with ACLU.
- 1980s: Takes the lead in initiating the Nuclear Freeze Campaign in cooperation with other groups. Initiates U.S.-U.S.S.R. reconciliation programme, including people-to-people exchanges, artistic and educational resources, teach-ins and conferences. Leads non-violence training seminars in the Philippines prior to the non-violent overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship.
- 1990s: Sends delegations of religious leaders and peace activists to Iraq to try to prevent war and later, to see the massive devastation caused by the economic sanctions imposed upon Iraq. Starts the Campaign to Save a Generation, an ongoing project centered on saving Iraqi children from the horrors of the sanctions, and American children from the poverty rampant in the United States. Launches "Stop the Killing, Start the Healing" campaign in response to escalating levels of gun violence in the United States. Initiates Bosnian Student Project, bringing students from the former Yugoslavia out of war zones and into U.S. homes and schools, and later starts the International Reconciliation Work Camp Project. Works to bring an end to the suffering of the Serbs and Kosovars during and after the war in former Yugoslavia. Works to ensure the U.S. military's withdrawal from Panama.

## FOR Supporters

“Your goal is, in my opinion, the only reasonable one and to make it prevail is of vital importance.”

— Albert Einstein, in a letter to FOR

“The Southern Christian Leadership Conference values its long partnership with FOR and recognises FOR’s outstanding work in the anti-war movement and continued commitment to peace and non-violence.”

— The Rev. Joseph Lowery, SCLC president

“Reconciliation required connection, not separation. I want to be connected with those who have the courage to care, the muscle to be compassionate. That is why I belong to FOR.”

— Rabbi Leo Berman, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles

“FOR has been in the forefront of the non-violent struggle for peace with justice. What is important about FOR is what it stands for. And that is a courageous dedication to the liberation of humanity from the triple evils of poverty, racism, and violence.”

— Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-violent Social Change

“I joined FOR because of the people who represented the Fellowship. They were really for non-violent action and were penetrated deeply with the sense of humanism with which Buddhists are familiar. What makes FOR meaningful to me is the presence of open-minded, deeply humanistic, and creative people.”

— Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, author and poet

## EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

### The Rebel Passion

In his introduction to Euripedes’ *The Trojan Women*, Gilbert Murray writes of pity as the “rebel passion. Its hand is against the strong, against the organised force of society, against conventional sanctions and accepted Gods. It is the Kingdom of Heaven within us fighting against the brute powers of the world.” From this idea, Vera Brittain took the title for her history of the FOR at the time of its fiftieth anniversary: *The Rebel Passion*.

It was such a passion that brought the Fellowship of Reconciliation into being in 1914. Convinced that war was near, some 150 Christians came together at an international conference in Germany, seeking



desperately to find a way to head off the outbreak of hostilities. The conference ended in failure; indeed, the war broke out while the meeting was being held. The participants hurried to catch trains back to their respective homelands. At the Cologne rail station, two of the participants—Henry Hodgkin, British Quaker, and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, pacifist chaplain to the German Kaiser—believing that the bonds of Christian love transcended all national boundaries, vowed that they would refuse to sanction war or violence and that they would sow the seeds of peace and love no matter what the future might bring. As they shook hands in farewell, they agreed that they were “one in Christ and can never be at war.”

Out of this vow the Fellowship of Reconciliation was born. The formal beginning came four months later at Trinity College, Cambridge, where 128 English members elected Hodgkin as their first chairperson. The founding of the German branch, Versöhnungsbund, came later. Schultze was arrested twenty-seven times during World War I and was forced to live in exile during the Nazi period.

In 1915, Hodgkin came to the United States to meet with sixty-eight men and women at Garden City, New York where the American FOR was founded on November 11, with Gilbert A. Beaver as its first chairperson. Leaders during those early years included Edward Evans, Norman Thomas, Bishop Paul Jones (who had been removed from the Episcopal Diocese of Utah because of his pacifism), and Grace Hutchins. John Haynes Holmes, Unitarian minister and one of the early FOR members pointed out that most people believe war is wrong in general, but nonetheless go on to justify each particular war. Placing the claims of the nation state below that of religious faith, Holmes wrote: “No one is wise enough, no nation is important enough, no human interest is precious enough, to justify the wholesale destruction and murder which constitute the science of war.”

Members of the Fellowship bore gallant witness to the insanity of war and the belief that truth is stronger than falsehood, that love overcomes hate, and that non-violence is more enduring than violence. For them, religious faith broke down the barriers of nation and race, class and tradition. Spreading this vision, even in wartime, has remained the central witness of the Fellowship.

A major focus has been working for the rights of conscientious objectors, who were treated harshly during the first World War. Except for those from the historic peace churches (who usually were granted CO status), many were imprisoned, left without clothes in cold cells, firehosed and manacled in their cells.



---

John Nevin Sayre, American churchman and early chair of the FOR, went directly to President Wilson to protest the inhumane treatment and the torture was ended. After extensive lobbying by FOR and others, concessions were made that led finally to legal recognition of conscientious objection during World War II. In that war, more than 16,000 men performed “work of national importance” in public service camps. Some, however, still went to prison when their beliefs clashed with Selective Service rules. These included five FOR staff members: Roger Axford, Caleb Foote, Alfred Hassler, Bayard Rustin and Glenn Smiley.

While war has been the central social evil the FOR has sought to eradicate, an expanding social vision has moved the Fellowship into other critical areas needing the work of reconciliation and the establishment of justice. In 1918, it helped found Brookwood Labour College. In 1919, A.J. Muste, who was then head of the Boston FOR, rose to prominence during the textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where the power of non-violent action was effectively demonstrated.

Another area of enduring FOR concern has been to eradicate the evil of racism and to build what Martin Luther King, Jr. called “the Beloved Community.” Years before there was a civil rights movement, the FOR was active in this effort. With the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), FOR sponsored the first interracial sit-in, in 1943. As a consequence of its interracial Journey of Reconciliation through the South in 1947, FOR race relations secretaries received the Jefferson Award of the Council Against Intolerance. FOR was instrumental in ending segregation in public facilities in such cities as Denver and Washington, D.C. and in 1957, staff member Glenn Smiley worked beside Martin Luther King, Jr. in the decisive Montgomery bus boycott. Staff member James Lawson, based in Nashville led non-violence trainings throughout the South that were of seminal importance to the civil rights movement. The FOR provided speakers in churches, synagogues and schools, held workshops, raised money for bombed churches and produced films and literature (including the film “Walk to Freedom” and the Martin Luther King Jr. comic book in English and Spanish) that were widely distributed across the country.

Alongside such efforts of the FOR in the United States, the work of the Fellowship was growing worldwide. The International FOR was established in 1919 to coordinate the new national chapters that were being formed. Its first secretary was Pierre Ceresole, the Swiss pacifist who was jailed time and again for his peace witness, and from

whose vision and labors came the modern work camp movement. It first brought together volunteers from former enemy nations to undertake reconstruction projects in war-ravaged Europe. Relief for the victims of war was carried out, and international conferences and meetings spread the work of peace to many other parts of the globe. In 1932, the FOR led a Youth Crusade across Europe in support of the Geneva World Disarmament Conference. Protestants and Catholics from all over converged on Geneva by various routes, reaching over 50,000 people and presenting to the Conference a petition calling for total disarmament among the nations. As the clouds of war gathered across Europe later in that decade, the FOR established Embassies of Reconciliation that initiated peace efforts not only in Europe but in Japan and China as well.

“Ambassadors of Reconciliation,” such as George Lansbury, Muriel Lester and Anne Seesholtz, visited many world leaders, including Hitler, Mussolini, Leon Blum and Roosevelt. Muriel Lester, English social worker, served as FOR traveling secretary throughout the world, helping to establish its work in many countries. A stirring speaker and writer, she was a practical mystic who was equally at home holding a School of Prayer in Uruguay, working with Gandhi for India’s independence, or fighting the drug trade in China. When World War II erupted, many European members of the FOR were in the front ranks of non-violent resistance to totalitarianism and to all the dehumanising aspects of the war. Many were imprisoned and scores were executed. Heroic efforts were undertaken to aid the victims of war.

Thousands of Jews and other refugees were successfully hidden and smuggled to safety, as in the south of France, where Andre and Magda Trocme led the villagers of Le Chambon to establish a haven in the midst of Nazi and Vichy terror. Even in Germany itself, members of the Versöhnungsbund, like Heinz Kloppenburg, Irmgard Schuchardt and Martin Nieomuller were active in the non-violent resistance to fascism.

In the United States, FOR took action when the US government ordered Japanese-Americans into internment camps in 1942. FOR held public protests of the action and extended concrete help to the victims (such as caring for the property of those forcibly evacuated). An FOR member, Gordon Hirabayashi, was the only Nisei to refuse to register for evacuation; his case went to the Supreme Court. FOR provided for visits to the camps and set up a travel loan fund to help resettle

people after they were released from the relocation centers. The national office added a young Japanese-American to its staff to interpret to schools, churches and FOR groups what was happening to people of Japanese ancestry.

In 1944, the FOR published Vera Brittain's "Massacre by Bombing," a carefully documented study of the saturation bombing of Germany by the Allies. Signed by twenty-eight prominent American church leaders, the publication aroused international concern over the effects of obliteration bombing and heightened public awareness of the savagery of modern warfare. Bringing such information to the public has been one of FOR's main functions. Its first magazine, *The World Tomorrow*, was begun in 1918. By 1934, its circulation had risen to 40,000. Editors over the years included Norman Thomas, Devere Allen, Kirby Page and Reinhold Niebuhr. *The World Tomorrow* was succeeded in 1935 by *Fellowship*, edited by Harold Fey; later editors included John Nevin Sayre, Alfred Hassler, William Miller, James Forest, and Virginia Baron.

After World War II, there was a major effort to establish a year of permanent military training for all young men in the US, to be followed by seven years of reserve service. Under the leadership of John Swomley, FOR worked with a large coalition to form the National Council Against Conscription, which waged a successful campaign to defeat the proposal for Universal Military Training.

The end of World War II brought in its wake a new and unprecedented moral issue: nuclear weapons. From the dropping of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the FOR condemned nuclear weapons. In the 1950s, the FOR opposed atomic testing and sent a public statement to Japan expressing sorrow over the tragedy of fishermen who were radioactively burned by the Pacific bomb tests. It also spoke out against the civil defense programme that conditioned people to be ready for still another war.

Members such as Dorothy Day and A.J. Muste refused to take shelter in New York City during air raid drills. Their repeated arrests for civil disobedience helped to build public awareness that there is no shelter from nuclear war. In 1995 FOR executive secretary Jo Becker led a delegation to Japan with a message of repentance for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that helped challenge anew the official US view of the necessity of those bombings.

FOR responded creatively to the fad for fallout shelters with its Shelters for the Shelterless campaign that built dwellings for homeless

people in India. It also made the first proposal that American surplus food be sent to Communist China. In 1954, the FOR launched a six-year Food for China Programme in response to Chinese famine. Tens of thousands of miniature bags of grain were sent to President Eisenhower with the inscription, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him."

During this period, the witch hunts of Senator Joseph McCarthy intimidated many leaders. Communists and blacklisted persons were denied access to speaking platforms. FOR sponsored a public forum in which A.J. Muste and Norman Thomas debated two Communist leaders in a forceful and daring affirmation of free speech at Carnegie Hall in New York. In the 1960s the FOR formed the International Committee of Conscience on Vietnam, with 10,000 clergy in forty countries. Contact with the Vietnamese Buddhist pacifist movement was established, spearheaded by the untiring efforts of the US executive secretary, Alfred Hassler.

In 1968, at the height of the suffering in Vietnam, FOR sponsored a world tour by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, whose poetry and other writings, as well as his speeches and presence, made a profound impact wherever he went. FOR's "Meals of Reconciliation" raised money for medical aid for all areas of Vietnam. In 1969, the FOR Study Team on Religious and Political Freedom documented Saigon's reliance on torture and initiated a prodigious effort to gain the release of Vietnamese political prisoners, some of whom had been crippled for life. These various missions to Vietnam continued a tradition of FOR since its inception, in which missions of reconciliation and friendship have been sent to such places as the Philippines (1925), Haiti (1926), Central America (in the 1920s, 1980s and 1990s), the USSR throughout the 1980s, Libya in 1989, Iraq and Israel/Palestine in the 1990s. After the Vietnamese war ended, a campaign for amnesty for US war resisters was launched, as well as a programme to help support Vietnamese orphans. In 1970, Dai Dong was founded as a groundbreaking transnational project linking war, environmental problems, poverty and other social issues. Thousands of scientists around the world were reached through this programme, as evidenced by the Menton Statement, signed by 2,200 biologists (including four Nobel Prize Laureates). The full statement, "A Message to our 3 1/2 Billion Neighbors on Planet Earth," was published in the UNESCO Courier and received worldwide attention. In 1972, in an effort to move public opinion beyond the constraints of national self-interest, Dai Dong sponsored an alternative environmental conference in Stockholm at the time of the UN Environmental Conference.

---

With the end of the Vietnam War, FOR placed major emphasis on ending the Cold War, reversing the arms race, meeting human needs and building global solidarity. FOR was part of a growing number of groups-peace, environmental, minority rights, women, anti-intervention-that worked for a more compassionate domestic and foreign policy. It joined in campaigns, marches, educational projects, and civil disobedience. At sessions of the World Council of Churches and the UN, FOR sponsored Plowshares Coffee Houses to provide an alternative forum for critical issues facing the world community.

In the 1980s, as the Cold War deepened, FOR launched a major emphasis on US-USSR Reconciliation to undergird its disarmament efforts and to root out the enemy image that had so poisoned East-West relations. Through people-to-people projects and exchanges, FOR made a significant contribution to the dramatic turnaround in US-Soviet relations that occurred in the late 1980s. FOR also pioneered in bringing non-violence education and training to Russia and Lithuania as the Soviet Union broke up.

Recent years have seen the growth of IFOR branches and affiliates in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The seeds planted earlier by traveling secretaries like Muriel Lester and John Nevin Sayre bore fruit, along with the decades of seminars in active non-violence carried out by Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr of Paris and Vienna, three times nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. From such labors arose Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ) throughout Latin America. SERPAJ's Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980. IFOR training in active non-violence contributed significantly to the people power overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines in 1986, as well as the growth of non-violent movements in Asia and Africa. The Goss-Mayrs, IFOR Honorary Presidents, were central to the global spread of active non-violence.

FOR, under the work of executive secretary Doug Hostetter, made valiant efforts to stop the Gulf War through repeated delegations to Iraq that sought to keep open possibilities of a peaceful resolution of the crisis brought on by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. After the war one million dollars in medical supplies were taken to victims of the war. Efforts to build peace with Iraq and to stop the sanctions that killed so many innocent Iraqis have continued through the 1990s.

In response to ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, FOR initiated the Bosnian Student Project to bring Bosnian students to the US for study due to the disruption of their lives by the war. This



effort was matched by work camps for reconstruction and reconciliation in Bosnia.

Despite the end of the Cold War, the US military budget remained obscenely high, leading FOR to issue an Interfaith Call to Restore Sanity and Compassion to the National Agenda. FOR has also joined with other religious peace groups to foster a New Abolitionist Covenant to get rid of all nuclear weapons. FOR has placed special emphasis on youth through its Peacemaker Training Institute and its peace internships. Also in this period FOR worked for racial and economic justice, especially for women of colour in the workplace who so often work under dangerous and degrading conditions. There has also been a healing emphasis on racial dialogue and reconciliation in the U.S.

FOR's vigorous work in Latin America has been highlighted by its national leadership to ensure that the US fulfill its historic promise to decolonize and demilitarise the US presence in Panama and to faithfully comply with the Panama Canal Treaties. FOR joined with other groups to organise SIPAZ (International Service for Peace) to support a just and lasting peace in Chiapas.

With the assistance of FOR and its members, over the years a wide variety of parallel groups have come into existence: the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Workers Defense League, the Committee for Social Responsibility in Science, the Committee on Militarism in Education, and the American Committee on Africa. Such organisations have taken up tasks in such specific fields as civil liberties or the support of African independence movements. The FOR has sought to remain on the cutting edge of non-violent witness in each generation.

While the Fellowship has been religious in inspiration and outlook since its inception, the nature and dimensions of this commitment have broadened over the years. Founded by Christians, the Fellowship was at first centered in the ethic of love that Jesus taught, and this remains the faith of many FOR members. At the same time, the remarkable growth of non-violent thought and life in the twentieth century has had a profound impact on the Fellowship. It was deeply affected by Gandhi and the freedom struggle in India, with its roots in the ancient teachings of Hinduism. Jews have brought to the FOR a commitment to non-violence that grows out of Judaism's allegiance to universalism, justice and love. The powerful pacifist movement in Vietnam brought to the world's attention the great tradition of non-



---

violence that derives from Buddhism. One of IFOR's new Asian branches, in Bangladesh, includes many Muslims, as well as Hindus and Christians. Out of FOR's work against the Gulf War and the continuing sanctions in Iraq, FOR has joined increasingly with Muslims in peacemaking. The Muslim Peace Fellowship has become one of FOR's vital affiliates.

The FOR has seen these and other expressions of non-violence as indications of an unfolding understanding of the meaning of truth and the way of love.

As a result, the FOR has become interfaith, and as such is a religious pioneer, pushing beyond contemporary ecumenism. It encourages people to live out the full dimensions of their beliefs, even as they are enriched and strengthened by traditions other than their own.

The FOR has fostered and encouraged peace fellowships within the various religious traditions and with these fellowships has often led the way in challenging (and assisting) established religious bodies to take up the peacemaking task, from combating homophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice to witnessing against handgun violence at home and support of dictatorial and exploitative regimes abroad.

As we enter the twenty-first century, the challenge to peacemakers continues, not only to rid the world of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction, but to remove the occasion for war, oppression and hostility between and within nations, and to build a just peace and to save the earth. Under the vigorous leadership of executive secretary John Dear (the first priest in that position) and its national chairperson, James Lawson, FOR called for a forty day People's Campaign for peace and justice in the summer of 2000 in Washington, DC.

Throughout the world, people are showing their determination to be free and to be treated justly; they are learning the great power of non-violent struggle, compassion and reconciliation, even in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds. The UN declaration of the first decade of the new millennium as a decade for a culture of peace and non-violence is evidence of this hope.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, with its message of peace and active non-violence, grounded in faith and tested over many years, is uniquely equipped to speak to the present age and the universal longing for peace and justice.

## **WPP CONTRIBUTED TO DUTCH ACTION PLAN 1325**

WPP contributed to the creation of the Dutch Action Plan on UN Security Resolution 1325. On 4 December 2007 representatives from the Dutch government and NGO's signed the plan upon its launch at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. WPP will continue to be involved in the implementation of the plan. Currently the Action Plan is being translated into English and French; it will be downloadable from this website soonest.

## **4th Annual Regional Youth Peace Camp 2007 Lira District, Uganda**

CRY-Uganda was organising the 4th Annual Regional Youth Peace Camp scheduled for September 2007 in Lango Sub region, tentatively at the former National Teachers College—Ngetta, Lira District-Northern Uganda. This camp would have bring on board 150 young people mainly from Karamoja, Lango, Acholi and Teso (KALATE) region and from the Great Lakes region as well as international delegates from different walks of life and cultural backgrounds with different experiences in violent conflicts and situations, to learn, exchange and share experiences in search for alternative ways of managing and transforming violent conflicts in their societies.

Thich Nhat Hanh and Jack Kornfield issues statement of support to Burmese monks.

Los Angeles, USA—On Oct 5, nearly 2000 Buddhists and psychologists gathered for a UCLA sponsored conference on Eastern and Western Psychology.

Out of solidarity with the monks, nuns and people of Burma, renowned peace advocate and Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh instructed his entourage of 60 monks and nuns to wear their ceremonial saffron outer robes, which they had last done on 9-11.

After the monks and nuns had chanted the teachings of compassion, Dr. Jack Kornfield described the grave situation in Burma. He then read to the assembly the following statement which had been drafted by Dr. Kornfield, Thich Nhat Hanh and other conference leaders. Here is their statement!

## **DELEGATION FINDS BURMA CLOAKED IN FEAR**

December 15, 2007, San Francisco, California—A delegation organised by the U.S.-based Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) has returned from a eight-day visit with Burmese activists, monks, students,

---

orphans, and citizens in Rangoon, Burma, and along the Thai-Burma...  
(more) Statement by BPF here

### **UPRISING IN BURMA: WOMEN'S ACTIVISM**

The most important civil society uprising in 20 years is currently taking place in Burma, and women have taken a leading role. Dubbed the "saffron revolution", reflecting the colour of the robes that the thousands of monks and nuns are wearing, numbers reportedly reached up to 100,000 earlier in the week..." (more)

### **PEOPLE POWER STIRRING IN BURMA**

Early in the summer I received a request to visit Rangoon, Burma (or, using the official names decreed by the military government, Yangon, Myranmar). The time seemed propitious. Burma has languished under a cruel military government for decades... (more)

IFOR affiliate International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) issues statement

INEB, a global network of activists, spiritual leaders, organisations and academics of all Buddhist sects, who integrates the practice of Buddhism and social actions for a healthy, just and peaceful world, hereby conveying our strongest supports and solidarity with the Buddhists monks and the people

### **MISSION**

Founded in 1919 in response to the horrors of war in Europe, IFOR has taken a consistent stance against war and its preparation throughout its history. Perceiving the need for healing and reconciliation in the world, the founders of IFOR formulated a vision of the human community based upon the belief that love in action has the power to transform unjust political, social, and economic structures.

Today IFOR has 69 branches, groups, and affiliates in 43 countries on all continents. Although organised on a national and regional basis, IFOR seeks to overcome the division of nation states which are often the source of conflict and violence. Its membership includes adherents of all the major spiritual traditions as well as those who have other spiritual sources for their commitment to non-violence.

### **PEACE PRIZE LAUREAUTES**

IFOR also has six Nobel Peace Prize Laureates among its former and present members. Jane Addams (1931), Emily Green Balch (1946),

Chief Albert Luthuli (1960), Dr. Martin Luther King (1964), Mairead Corrigan-Maguire (1976), Adolfo Perez Esquivel (1980) have all been or are actively contributing to dissemination of the teaching of non-violence.

## **THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE**

IFOR members share a vision of a world where conflicts are resolved through non-violent means, where systems that foster fear and hatred are dismantled, and where justice is sought as a basis for peace. While coming from diverse religious backgrounds, we have a common belief in the transforming power of non-violence and reconciliation.

## **IFOR MEMBERS**

IFOR members carry out public education efforts, organise training programmes, and coordinate campaigns. We provide encouragement and support to people throughout the world who are promoting non-violence in their home communities and nations.

IFOR members work together primarily through their local branches and groups. Representatives from these organisations meet every four years at an IFOR Council, to decide on policies and develop international programmes. An elected International Committee meets regularly between Councils to oversee the implementation of these decisions.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

The IFOR international secretariat in Alkmaar, the Netherlands, co-ordinates communication among IFOR members, links branches to capacity-building resources (and through the WPP provides training in gender awareness), and helps co-ordinate international campaigns, delegations and urgent actions.

IFOR has extensive working relationships with like-minded non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society initiatives around the world. IFOR's 90 years of expertise in active non-violence is recognised and respected by these NGOs and many others.

## **INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION**

IFOR maintains permanent representatives at the United Nations (UN) in New York, Geneva and Vienna who regularly participate in conferences and meetings of UN bodies, providing testimony and expertise from different regional perspectives, promoting non-violent alternatives in the fields of human rights, development, and disarmament.

IFOR has observer and consultative status to the United Nations ECOSOC and UNESCO organisations.

IFOR has identified five main areas of concern for continued programme development. Many branches and groups carry out local projects on these issues.

### **Decade for a Culture of Non-violence**

Since the initiation of the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, in 2001, IFOR members have been active in working for peace education and in working to establish national coalitions to support the Decade.

### **Non-violence Education and Training**

IFOR assists groups and individuals to find ways in which they can transform conflicts into positive and growth oriented interactions that involve dialogue and lead to reconciliation. This is done through various presentations and training programmes, as well as through the creation of resource materials and contact with trainers and resource people.

### **Youth Empowerment**

IFOR provides young people with the skills and opportunities to become active peacemakers. This is done through non-violence and leadership training and through internships with IFOR branches and groups, or with the International Secretariat.

### **Interfaith Cooperation**

Religion has on occasion played a central role in fomenting conflict but can also be a source of inspiration and leadership for peace. IFOR sponsors interfaith delegations to areas of conflict and publishes material on non-violence from different religious traditions.

### **Disarmament**

Since our founding, IFOR has opposed war and preparations for war. IFOR members support conscientious objectors, campaign for a ban on land mines, and oppose nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

## **BRANCHES, GROUPS AND AFFILIATES**

Please find below an overview of the different activities, events and programmes organised or initiated in 2006 by IFOR Branches from different parts of the world.

**FOR ENGLAND**

FOR England continues to develop its education and youth work and for the first time in many years our youth conference was fully booked. The main focus of our campaigning work has been on the issue of arms sales through our 'Living by the sword' campaign. Over thirty senior Church leaders signed our statement calling for the closure of DESO, the arms export agency. We have also been working on the issue of West Papua, researching military funding of universities and working to prevent any military strike against Iran.

**FOR FRANCE**

The life of FOR France in 2006 was largely marked by the urban violence that Paris and other large cities in France faced in November of 2005. Numerous church communities called on FOR France to conduct or participate in trainings, discussion groups, peace forums, or meetings with churches composed of members who come from different ethnic groups at war in their home countries. But the most powerful action that we experienced was shared with a catholic parish that was organising a twelve-week course that ran from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. This collaboration helped to mobilise and renew all our resources and still today is responsible for placing us at the forefront of our mission in our own country.

**FOR MADAGASCAR**

Our common vision on non-violent action is well defined by the Madagascan proverb "Ny hery tsy mahaleo ny fanahy" which means "the physical force cannot conquer the spiritual force". All our activities in 2006 concentrated around the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace education on a national and regional level. Three main priority areas were set out by the national office to achieve the goals defined in our action plan for 2006 and to respond to the needs of the community, these were: Training, the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence, and Violence against women.

**FOR SWEDEN**

In 2006, our preventive presence programme in Colombia expanded. Our volunteers work in the capital Bogotá and in the western region Chocó. In Sweden, we conducted a highly successful "Peace Tour" with two Israelis and one Palestinian who travelled around and gave lectures to students. In November, we organised an inter-religious conference on peace and non-violence for young people. In our



---

disarmament programme, we campaigned for stricter guns control by taking part in the global Control Arms Campaign. We were quoted in several newspapers regarding the severe impacts of the Swedish arms export.

## **FOR USA**

The U.S. Fellowship of Reconciliation has long incubated projects which have become successful independent nonprofits. Having sent 17 peace delegations to Israel/Palestine by mid-2006, the Interfaith Peace-Builders programme became the latest to launch as an independent entity – in continuing partnership with FOR-USA.

For decades, FOR-USA has sent “behind the scenes” delegations to conflict regions. These “grassroots civilian diplomacy” initiatives have included the former U.S.S.R. (Cold War), Vietnam (1960s), Central America (1980s), and Iraq (leading up to the 1991 Gulf war). FOR-USA is currently sending delegations to Colombia (two in 2007), the most militarised nation in Latin America, and Iran (four in 2007), the target of U.S. political ire.

The year 2006 also was a period of significant organisational transition at FOR-USA. A search for a new executive director was completed in early 2007 with the hire of Mark Johnson, and FOR’s total staff was reduced from 32 to 17 persons.

## **FOR SWISS-SPEAKING GERMANY**

The year 2006 has been an exiting year with a warm start for a renewed steering board. Training and coaching activities have been focused on adult education, the church peace decade and our Somali Diaspora Peace support project. Members were actively involved to campaign in the World Economic Forum (WEF), bank secret and recently in a small arm campaign. We had visits from neighboring branches and from trainers and friends as Hildegard Goss-Mayr and Patricia Patfoort. FfF continuously networks with IFOR members towards coordination and to strengthen as well our capacity working on juvenile violence, refugee integration and on with peace constituencies in conflict zones.

## **Kerk en Vrede, the Netherlands**

As it was in previous years, one of the main activities of the Dutch IFOR branch Kerk en Vrede, was about Europe. In 2006 we published a new brochure critically reflecting on the European Union as a peace project. We expressed our worries about the recent developments that shifted the focus from conflict prevention towards military intervention.

We have organised several meetings in 2006, at one of which we discussed the possibility of setting up a European Civil Peace Corps with three members of Dutch parliament. Also, we started a campaign called 'No development workers with guns', which goal was to protest against the policy to start small development projects as part of military strategy and to fund military missions out of development budget.

### **WI'AM Center, Palestine**

The women department at the Wi'am centre is continually working with women in different areas of the West Bank (around 120 women) with a focus on underprivileged locations and women groups. The programme involves conducting training and education on different civic education topics of human rights, democracy, conflict transformation, and family therapy. Women are also engaged in topics of gender issues and political awareness on the local and international level. After initial training and education, a more advanced phase focuses on "training for trainers" component for those who are to become trainers themselves in these fields.

### **Youth Cultural Exchanges: Youth Power**

Wi'am is proud of being part of the Euro-Med project that connects young people coming from Europe and the Mediterranean. This year we have five groups of 8 young people in each group going to different parts of Europe (France, Germany, Italy) to meet their counterparts. The themes of the meetings centre around intercultural dialogue, youth empowerment, youth networking and solidarity, conflict transformation, leadership skills, dialogue, etc.

In addition we in partnership with Youth project that brings people from the Balkan, Palestine and Europe in a joint project called "Youth Power". The aim is to allow young people to learn the experiences of other countries that had been going through violent conflicts and learn from the experience. At the end of 2006, IFOR counted 69 member organisations in nearly 43 different countries on all continents.

During its quadrennial Council held in Japan in October 2006 IFOR welcomed 12 new member organisations.

### **Two new Branches**

In Nepal, Bikalpa Gyan Tatha Bikas Kendra (Alternative Learning and Development Centre) runs multiple peace/development education programmes on various issues, higher education loan programme for underprivileged youth, a micro-credit loan programme for women, and the Junkiri literacy programme.

In Congo-Brazzaville, le Mouvement de la Reconciliation de Peuples is continuing to play an important role in building peace between many of the communities in Congo. Building on their strong commitment to the non-violent and reconciliation teachings found in the Gospels, the organisation focuses on training teachers to teach young people and adults the way to reconcile through active non-violence.

### **Five new Groups**

In western Pakistan, the Sustainable Peace and Development Organisation (SPADO) works on four main focus areas: campaign against small arms, landmine advocacy, development and poverty reduction, and peace and security.

The Sudanese Organisation for Non-violence and Development (SONAD) has had a longstanding and cooperative relationship with FOR Sweden and has continued to build peace in a country ravished by war for over three decades. Their main activities include human rights education programme, DO NO HARM Project, non-violence education mobilization and peace building, School of Democracy, and an HIV/AIDS programme. In Benin, a small ecumenical Christian group is active in non-violence education and training, community development; and unity and democracy promotion.

Le Mouvement National de Reconciliation du Benin (MONAR) is continuing on actively recruiting members and hopes to build up a larger and more regional capacity in the country.

Dauphins Munzehirwa-Kataliko (DMK) is very active in human rights education, peace action initiatives, and development activities in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In nearby Rwanda, Umuryango W'Amahoro/Famille De Paix conducts non-violence trainings and also has a library with materials and resources on non-violence.

### **5 new Affiliates**

The Glenree Centre for Reconciliation is a very active retreat center that has a very eclectic focus. The focus areas are running a church programme, a women's programme, an education programme, an ex-combatant programme, an international programme, a business programme, the LIVE programme, a youth programme, and political programme.

The Peace Union of Finland is also another affiliate that has developed a working relationship with IFOR throughout the past few

years. They are continually advocating for peace and are based in Helsinki.

Family Mediation and Conciliation (FAMEC) based in Nairobi, Kenya, focuses on peace and human rights, mediation and conflict transformation counseling, legal empowerment, and researching and documentation.

Peace Makers Society works for the empowerment of local communities with a target on youth, women, and disadvantaged groups through capacity building training programmes and community development programmes.. Most of their work is being conducted in the Northern region of Cameroon.

The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, an international spiritually-based non-violence network, is very active in with 1,200 individual members in over 30 countries, as well as a sister organisation, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, in the USA.

## **INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION**

### **1. Does non-violence work?**

Yes! The 20th century has shown how effective non-violence can be in empowering whole populations. Non-violent struggle successfully ended British colonialism in India, stopped apartheid in South Africa, overthrew totalitarian states throughout Eastern Europe and toppled the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines.

Ends and means must be consistent—it you want to build a non-violent and just world, then non-violent means must be used.

### **2. How could non-violence have defeated Hitler?**

Early warning systems and non-violent conflict prevention are needed to stop dictatorships before they happen. Non-violence has been successfully used to oppose and overthrow totalitarian and aggressive regimes, as the examples given in Question 1 above show. The Versailles Treaty, imposed upon Germany by the winners of World War I, humiliated and hurt Germany economically. Hitler manipulated the German peoples' sense of being wronged and used violence and the military to come into power. Inside Germany, Germans like Sophie and Hans Scholl, organizers of the White Rose movement, non-violently resisted Hitler.

Non-violence was successfully used by individuals, towns and whole countries during World War II. Outside Germany, for example, the townspeople of Le Chambon, France, saved an estimated 5,000 Jews from Nazi persecutors by their determined non-violent resistance.

---

Organised non-cooperation by the people of Norway and Denmark made their countries ungovernable despite Nazi control.

### **3. How can you use non-violence when you are physically attacked, especially in cases of sexual assault?**

Being aware of increasing tension and potential violence is important in preventing violence, from the individual level to the international level. There are many examples of how non-violence has been used by individuals to prevent or stop violence, including sexual violence. The following are just two examples: a woman, walking home at night from work, was assaulted. She insisted on dragging the would-be rapist to the nearest street lamp, saying, "I want to see the face of the man who is going to rape me." She kept talking to him, about how tired she was from work, about how she wanted to go home, forcing him to acknowledge her as a human being. Ashamed, he ran away.

In another example, a young woman was riding her bicycle through woods after visiting a bakery. A man jumped out from hiding and grabbed hold of her bicycle, forcing her to stop. She did something unexpected—she handed him one of the cakes from the bakery. Equally startled, the man accepted the cake, and she biked to safety.

The first woman refused to be humiliated or to humiliate the would-be rapist in turn. She insisted on recognising both her own and his humanity. The second woman also refused to act like the victim the would-be rapist wanted. She used her imagination and responded unexpectedly. Respecting both your own and the opponent's humanity, and imagination are hallmarks of non-violence.

### **4. How is non-violence applicable in the struggle for gender equality?**

Gender equality means respecting the values, experiences and roles of both men and women. Gender equality can only come about when we live the values we want to see realised. Respect for each other is both the end and a means in non-violent struggle, and the only way to achieve gender equality. Non-violent strategies and tactics that have been used successfully in other social change movements can be used in the struggle for gender equality.

Non-violence is not only important in providing a means of struggle, however. Non-violence can also offer alternative values, norms and role models. Providing such alternatives is critical in building gender equality. Current gender inequality and gender-based violence rest on certain ideas of what it is to be a man or a woman. Masculinity is increasingly linked to violence. Femininity is linked with passivity



and obedience. Masculinity and associated male norms, such as control and dominance, are seen as normative and desirable. The acceptance of male norms has affected young girls, some of whom have started to use violent methods in their search for equality and recognition. Rather than encouraging women to become more involved in violence, men must be encouraged to redefine masculinity and break the links between being a “real” man and being violent.

### **5. Why do we never hear about non-violence if it is so powerful?**

Lack of media attention about non-violence is one reason. Non-violence requires preparation and discipline, which can be hard to portray in short news bites. Violence can be dramatic and easier to portray. The entertainment media often glorifies violence, and in particular makes a link between being violent and being a ‘real’ man.

Another reason is that many governments are not interested in empowering their citizens. Non-violence requires good organisation. Organising ordinary people for social action is seen as a threat by many governments, and is actively undermined.

Perhaps the main reason, however, that we do not hear about non-violence is because non-violence underlies much of everyday life. The majority of peoples’ behaviour is non-violent. Non-violence is so pervasive that it is often invisible or not identified as non-violence. Important non-violent movements such as women’s suffrage and the abolition of slavery are not identified as non-violence, nor is non-violence taught as such in schools. Much of non-violent conflict prevention is also behind the scenes and deliberately kept out of the media.

### **6. Do I have to be religious to be a non-violent activist?**

All the major spiritual traditions of the world have a message of peace and justice. The core values of non-violence—a respect for life, including the life of an enemy, and the pursuit of justice and human dignity—reflect these concerns. Injustices like racism, sexism, ethnic and religious discrimination involve the idea that some people are inherently better than others. Challenging this belief is the beginning of building a culture based on non-violence and peace. Anyone willing to challenge violence without using violence themselves, whether they are religious or non-religious, can be a non-violent activist.

### **7. What does religion have to say about non-violence?**

Peace and justice are central values in all religions, and those who can create peace out of enmity are respected and considered role



models. There is a wealth of material on the tradition of non-violence within major world religions such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism (for example, see *The Non-violence of the Brave: Non-violence in Different Spiritual Traditions*, available from IFOR). While much attention has been paid recently to the role religion has in today's violent conflicts, less has been paid to religion's potential for peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Each spiritual tradition, too, has adherents who are progressive and who seek positive social change, and others who want to maintain tradition and the status quo. The peace message within different religions will be interpreted differently, too, according to the political beliefs of its followers. A growing number of people are organising within different religions in order to push for a strong stance on peace and justice issues, including issues of women's human rights.

#### **8. What's the difference between non-violence and active non-violence?**

There is a myth that non-violence is passive. Nothing could be further from the truth. Non-violence does not mean a passive acceptance of injustice. The phrase 'active non-violence' is sometimes used in English to emphasise that non-violence confronts violence and transforms injustice. Other cultures have other words for non-violence. During the Indian liberation struggle, Gandhi used the Sanskrit words *ahimsa* (non-killing) or *satyagraha* (clinging to the truth). In Spanish-speaking Latin America the phrase *firmeza permanente* (relentless persistence) is used, while the Palestinian non-violent movement uses the Arabic word *sumoud* (steadfastness).

Non-violence does not seek to avoid conflict. Conflict is a natural part of life and is necessary to change situations of injustice, for example, when a group in society faces discrimination. Non-violence works to transform conflict from a destructive process into a constructive process. It can be used to confront many different types of violence, from individual violence to structural violence. Non-violent struggle can mobilise large numbers of ordinary people, regardless of race, gender, age, caste, sexual orientation or other differences.

#### **9. Is non-violence the same as civil disobedience?**

Centuries of non-violent struggle have resulted in many tactics. Such non-violent tactics can include strikes, boycotts, refusing military service, mass rallies, and/or refusing to pay taxes. All of these are acts of civil disobedience, or in other words, the deliberate and public non-violent breaking of the law in order to bring about positive change.

Over 198 different methods of non-violent action have been documented, including fasts, petition campaigns, marches, pickets and silent vigils.

### **10. How do I find out more information about non-violence?**

Non-violence is not a new idea. It is a way of struggling for justice and peace that has been in every culture, throughout history. Start learning more about non-violence by looking for historical examples within your own culture. Look, too, at how the people around you, in your family, your neighborhood, your government, respond to differences among people. Are the responses violent or non-violent? What is your definition of non-violence?

There are many books, documentaries and websites devoted to non-violence. Look for writings by activists such as Aung San Suu Kyi, Gandhi, Barbara Deming and Martin Luther King, Jr. Click on the Time Line of Non-violence or More Resources to learn more about active non-violence, or check out websites such as <http://www.paceebene.org/> or <http://www.wri-irg.org/>.

### **QUOTES**

These quotes and many more can be found in "Just Words: Quotations on Gender, Non-violence and Peace". This booklet, compiled and edited by Shelley Anderson, is part of the IFOR produced series Patterns in Reconciliation.

"We are all invited to work together for peace. We shall join hands and minds to work for peace through active non-violence. We shall help one another, encourage one another and learn from one another how to bring peace to our children and to all." Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, Northern Ireland, 1976 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

"It's easier if you catch them young. You can train older men to be soldiers; it's done in every major war. But you can never get them to believe that they like it, which is the major reason armies try to get their recruits before they are twenty.

"There are other reasons too, of course, like the physical fitness, lack of dependents, and economic dispensability of teenagers, that make armies prefer them, but the most important qualities teenagers bring to basic training are enthusiasm and naïvete."

**Gwynne Dyer, War, 1985, London: Guild Publishing**

"My ethnic group is the human race. We stayed together to the end. No one sold the other out."

“Fulgence, a teenager in 1997 when Hutu militants attacked his school in Burundi. The students refused to divide into ethnic groups even after militants began shooting. He was one of the few survivors.

“Nothing could be worse than the fear that one has given up too soon, and left one unexpended effort which might have saved the world.”

**Jane Addams (1860-1935), IFOR member and 1931 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate**

“Never give up. No matter what is going on, never give up. Develop the heart. Too much energy in your country is spent developing the mind instead of the heart. Develop the heart. Be compassionate. Not just to your friends but to everyone.

Be compassionate. Work for peace. And I say again: never give up. No matter what is happening, no matter what is going on around you, never give up.”

**His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet**

“I am disgusted with the hollow talk of disarmament—we put wreaths on the grave of the Unknown Soldier, who’s pretty damn well known by now as a symbol of the next war—we will never have peace so long as the interlocking munitions interests of Germany, France, England control governmental parties and influential groups—so long as people go on manufacturing death and trying to sell it.”

**Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), US poet**

“What are human beings without the animals? If all the animals were gone humankind too would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the animals soon happens to human beings. All things are connected.”

**Chief Seattle (1786 -1866) American Indian leader**

“Activism pays the rent on being alive and being here on the planet.”

**Alice Walker, US novelist**

“For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying ‘Peace, peace’, when there is no peace.”

**The Bible, Jeremiah 6:13-14**

“Women are human beings first, with minor differences from men that apply largely to the act of reproduction. We share the dreams,

capabilities and weaknesses of all human beings, but our occasional pregnancies and other visible differences have been used to make for us an elaborate division of labour that may once have been practical but has since become cruel and false.

The division is continued for a clear reason, consciously or not: the economic and social profit of men as a group."

**Gloria Steinem (1935- ),US feminist**

"Jihad can only be a struggle for social justice. It can never be a partisan struggle for power. There is no Qur'anic verse that can be used to justify war in the contemporary world. Self-defense can be legitimate, but Muslims cannot kill civilians or other Muslims.

All modern weapons kill civilians as a matter of course. Talk of collateral damage is nonsense. So the armed struggle of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is no longer available to us. Now, jihad has to be unarmed struggle."

**Rabia Terri Harris, founder, Muslim Peace Fellowship**

"We know through painful experience that Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

**Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) US Civil Rights leader**

"I do not wish them [women] to have power over men; but over themselves."

**Mary Wollstonecraft,**

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792).*

"The role of women is key. Women were excluded from war beginning in prehistory, not for biological reasons. They were excluded because of the contradiction between marriage and war. Wives usually came from those who were—at least sometimes—the enemy. Their loyalty could not be guaranteed when a war took place between their husbands on one side and their fathers and brothers on the other side.

The exclusion of women from war in prehistory continued in their exclusion from power in the State, which was founded on the basis of the culture of war. The equality of women is therefore one of the key principles of a culture of peace."

Dr. David Adams, former UNESCO Culture of Peace Director, speaking at the IFOR Council 2002.

"It is not gender which is destroying our culture, sometimes it is our interpretations of culture which have destroyed gender equality."

### **Cambodian NGOs' calendar for 2000**

"Too small or 'atomised' in its manifestations and at the same time too large and general to be visible in all this is the most widespread tyranny of all, the oppression of women by men. This is not recognised as a 'conflict' or 'mass violence', because the direct violence takes the form of endless numbers of seemingly isolated acts.

It is so ingrained and routine that it is invisible, or at least largely unrecognised by those who benefit from it or who have learnt to accommodate it. It is the relationship of domination, which, in its pervasiveness, overarches all others."

Dr. Diana Francis (1944-), former IFOR president, from her book *People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action*, Pluto Press, 2002

"If you had seen what it was like in that stairway, you'd be proud. There was no gender, no race, no religion. It was everyone, unequivocally, helping each other."

Survivor of the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, September 11, 2001

"If you want to see the brave, look at those who can forgive. If you want to see the heroic, look at those who can love in return for hatred."

### **The Bhagavad-Gita**

"God has mercy upon those who are merciful to others."

### **The Prophet Mohammad**

"It was very hard for me to forgive the Khmer Rouge for what they did to me, to my family and my friends, and especially to my beloved country, but the burden of revenge that I carried for a decade was lightened from the moment I did so. I am sometimes accused by other Cambodian friends of supporting the Khmer Rouge because I refuse to accuse them, but if I kill the Khmer Rouge, I will become like one of them."

Renee Pan, democracy activist, founder of the Cambodian Children's Education Fund.

"To reconcile conflicting parties, we must have the ability to understand the suffering of both sides. But how many of us are able to do that?"

**Thich Nhat Hanh**

(1926-), Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Zen master and peace activist. "Individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience.

Therefore [individual citizens] have the duty to violate domestic laws to prevent crimes against peace and humanity from occurring."

**Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, 1950**

"I would say I'm a non-violent soldier. In place of weapons of violence, you have to use your mind, your heart, your sense of humor, every faculty available to you...because no one has the right to take the life of another human being."

**Joan Baez,(1941—), US folk singer**

"Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being."

**Mohandas K. Gandhi**

(1869-1948), leader of India's independence movement

"Non-violence doesn't always work—but violence never does."

Madge Micheels-Cyrus, US civil rights and peace activist.

"Peace cannot exist without justice, justice cannot exist without fairness, fairness cannot exist without development, development cannot exist without democracy, democracy cannot exist without respect for the identity and worth of cultures and peoples."

Gwynne Rigoberta Menchu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Guatemalan indigenous activist.

"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do."

Helen Keller (1880-1968), US disability rights activist.

**NON-VIOLENCE TIME-LINE**

Circa ED5F001300 BCE, Egypt: two Hebrew midwives refuse Pharaoh's order to kill all newborn male Hebrew babies. The women hide a baby boy in reeds by a river bank, as recorded in the Bible (Exodus, chapters 1 and 2). They find an ally in an Egyptian princess, who adopts the baby and calls him Moses. It was the first documented case of civil disobedience.



Circa 420 BCE, Greece: dramatist Aristophanes (c. 447-385 BCE) writes the comedy *Lysistrata*, about women who end the Peloponnesian War by withholding sex until their warrior husbands agree to peace. In 2003, women against the war in Iraq organised The *Lysistrata* Project which saw 1,029 readings of the play all over the world. The group developed a study guide for young people on the play, in order to encourage thinking about peace.

1789, France: working class women march from Paris to the king's palace in Versailles to demand bread for their hungry families.

1807, UK: after a mass petition and public awareness campaign, the British slave trade is outlawed. The abolition movement begins a campaign to gradually free 800,000 already enslaved Africans working on West Indian sugar cane plantations. By the 1830s women like Elizabeth Heyrick set up their own anti-slavery groups, organise a door-to-door campaign that launches a successful sugar boycott, and pressure the largest abolition organisation to push for immediate, not gradual, freedom for slaves. In 1831 in Jamaica 20,000 slaves rise up, demanding wages for their work, and are brutally suppressed.

1870s, Japan: Kusunose Kita refuses to pay taxes because she cannot also vote, and so sparks the women's suffrage movement in Japan.

1871, France: women of Paris encircle different military units, cut the harnesses of soldiers' horses and cover canons with their bodies in order to prevent bloodshed between the Parisian National Guard and government troops from Versailles.

1905, India: Bengali Muslim feminist Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein publishes *Sultana's Dream* and *Selections from The Secluded Ones*. The book denounces purdah by portraying a world where men are confined to home and women dominate public life. Hossein works throughout her life to promote education for women and girls, explaining that Islam promotes women's education.

1923, China: 20,000 Shanghai women silk workers strike, demanding a ten-hour work day.

"I am going to give you such a weapon that the police and the army will not be able to stand against it. It is the weapon of the Prophet, but you are not aware of it. That weapon is patience and righteousness. No power on earth can stand against it." — Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

1930s, North-West Frontier (Afghanistan): Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a close associate of Gandhi, forms a 100,000 strong peace army called *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Servants of God). Sworn to non-violence (and

rejecting the Pathan traditional of revenge and blood feuds), the peace army builds schools, institute village development projects, and oppose British colonialism. The Khudai Khidmatgar includes many women, inspired by Khan's espousal of women's rights and his condemnation of purdah.

1940s, France: while the country is under occupation by Hitler's troops, the villagers of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon shelter escaping Jews, sharing food, forging identity documents and smuggling people to safety. Leadership is provided by Pastor André Trocmé and his wife Magda, who said most of the resistance was organised around kitchen tables. The villagers are credited with saving the lives of 5,000 refugees, including 3,500 Jews.

1943, UK: all British women up to 51 years old are required by law to work in war-related services or industry. 214 women conscientious objectors are jailed for refusing to do civilian work to support the UK war effort.

1943, Germany: Jewish men married to non-Jewish women are rounded up and imprisoned in Berlin. 24 women gather in Rosenstrasse street in front of the Gestapo headquarters to demand their husbands' release. It is the first public defiance inside Germany and Nazi officials do not know how to respond. The crowd grows to 1,000 women. On the third day SS troops are told to train their guns on the crowd. The women refuse to give up. After six days all 1,500 men are released.

1951, Egypt: founder of the Daughters of the Nile Union (1948), Doria Shafik, organises an invasion of Parliament by women to demand their rights.

1957, Cuba: 40 women, mothers of sons murdered by the Batista regime, march silently from church to city hall in Santiago under the banner *Cesen los asesinatos de nuestros hijos* (Stop the murder of our sons). As they march they are joined by over 900 other women. The silent march sparks the successful public effort to oust the Batista dictatorship.

1977, Argentina: 14 women demonstrate illegally in the square of the presidential palace waving photographs of their children and demanding to know their fate. The dictatorship has kidnapped and killed over 10,000 people. More and more women return every week. When the leaders are killed, the women meet in secret in church pews and begin the weekly demonstrations again. Ridiculed as 'the crazy mothers of the Plaza de Mayo' they persist in denouncing the tortures and disappearances, and help bring down the military dictatorship.

---

1981, England: a handful of women march from Cardiff to Greenham Common airbase to protest the decision to store nuclear weapons there. From then until 2000 (when the US airforce leaves), women maintain a peace camp outside the base, using blockades and other creative means to raise public awareness of the dangers of nuclear war. In December 1982, 50,000 women join hands to encircle the base. Parts of the fence are brought down and hundreds are arrested.

1984, UK: fashion designer Katherine Hamnett meets with then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wearing a dress with the message '58 % Don't Want Pershing', as a protest against the deployment of US Pershing II nuclear weapons in Western Europe.

1988, Palestine: during the first intifada the town of Beit Sahour (some 10,000 people) decides to non-violently resist the occupation by refusing to pay taxes to Israel. Soldiers cut off telephone lines, refuse to allow food in, impose a curfew, imprison resisters and begin to confiscate commercial and private property. The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People is set up to organise dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. The townspeople persist in tax resistance until 1995 when the Palestinian Authority assumes control.

1988, Israel: Israeli women, dressed in black as a sign of mourning, line busy streets, holding signs protesting the Israeli occupation of Palestine. They call their network Women in Black. The idea spreads until there are Women in Black vigils and peace groups in over a dozen countries.

1989, Uganda: the Ugandan Fellowship of Reconciliation set up a vocational training centre in war torn Gulu region to equip former child combatants with skills to return to civilian life. Peacemaking is included in the curriculum in addition to teaching sewing and carpentry.

1990, Burma: Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Burma's democratic movement wins an overwhelming election victory although she is under house arrest. The Burmese military dictatorship refuses to transfer power and keeps her under house arrest for seven years, during which she is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (in 1991) and continues to speak out for democracy and human rights in Burma.

1993, Burundi: a Tutsi mob arrives in Ijenda, hunting Hutus in order to kill them. The Tutsi woman Rebecca Hatungimana hides 41 Hutu neighbors in her home, defending them when mobs arrive armed with spears and machetes. Her husband risks his life to protect the neighbors' homes and cattle; her children lead the neighbors to their fields at night so they can cultivate them, and then back to Rebecca's for safety.

“I did this because I am convinced that human life is sacred, and that no one would have benefited from the death of my neighbors. I did not protect them because I am a Tutsi or a Hutu. I did it because morality obligated me to act. We are created by the same God.”

### **Rebecca Hatungimana**

1994, India: Indigenous Naga women face violence from Indian security forces and from different factions among the Naga armed movement for self-determination. Factional fighting terrorizes villagers and leaves unclaimed corpses in the bazaars. Women organise the ‘Shed No More Bloodshed’ campaign, beginning with a Day of Mourning for all those killed. The women’s nonpartisan Peace Team organises public rallies, prayer days, denounce rapes by security forces and later facilitate face-to-face dialogue between faction leaders.

1995, Italy: Women workers at Valsella Meccanotecnica, a company which produces landmines, successfully campaign for economic conversion—to replace making landmines with the production of useful civilian goods. They send a solidarity statement to Cambodian women during the seminar “Voice of Cambodian Women against Landmines” in Phnom Penh.

1996, Colombia: Movimiento de los Niños por La Paz (Children’s Movement for Peace) organise a national peace referendum for children. 2.7 million children vote for peace, and media coverage of the children’s desire for peace moves the nation. 500 trained adolescent volunteers travel the country with rag dolls, puppets and toys to provide trauma counseling to younger children affected by the war. A year later 10 million adults vote ‘yes’ for a Citizen’s Mandate for Peace, Life and Freedom.

1997, Colombia: 2,000 inhabitants of the poor rural community San José de Apartadó, tired of violence, tell the army, leftist guerillas and right-wing paramilitaries to leave. Declaring their community a gun-free zone, they vow not to sell food or give information to any armed group. 50 other communities, aided by international human rights groups and churches, have since become peace communities. Over 100 members have been assassinated but the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó persists in building a culture of peace.

1998, Colombia: the mayor of Bogota declares three Nights for Women. Men are urged to stay at home to care for the children and to reflect on women’s roles in society. Some 700,000 women come out the first night, to enjoy strolling down roads temporarily converted into pedestrian zones and free open-air concerts. In some neighborhoods, women applaud when they see a man holding a baby.

---

2000, Serbia: Youth form the pro-democracy movement Otpor ('Resistance' in Serbian) in 1998 in response to oppressive university and media laws. After NATO air strikes, Otpor begins a creative non-violent campaign against Yugoslav president Milosevic, using, among other tactics, rock concerts, demonstrations in front of jails holding imprisoned members, and humorous television advertisements. Despite arrests and beatings, the youth movement helps to defeat Milosevic in the 2000 election.

"At this point in history we have learned a great deal about non-violent resistance to evil and bringing down oppressors. We still have far to go in knowing how to take the next steps in fostering the democratic evolution of society that includes justice and peace, freedom and order. Democracy is the institutionalization of non-violent problem-solving in society." Richard Deats

2001, Kashmir: Muslim, Hindu and Sikh women form the Athwaas Initiative, to travel throughout Kashmir villages and migrant camps listening to women whose lives have been shattered by the violence, collecting their testimonies and dreams for peace.

2002, USA: Western Shoshone grandmothers Carrie and Mary Dann lead the struggle to preserve indigenous cultural and land rights. Mining and nuclear interests try to illegally buy Western Shoshone land for 15 cents an acre and dispossess the people. The land is the third largest gold producing area in the world and home to Yucca Mountain, a proposed US nuclear waste repository. Government raids seize Shoshone cattle and horses, but the Dann sisters continue to speak out.

"The elders before us stood up for life...our Indian children are over in Iraq fighting for their country. What are they fighting for? If the war on terrorism is about protecting this country then why is our own government trying to take away our homelands?" Mary McCloud, Western Shoshone elder

2002, Philippines: Bernie Eliseo steps between an angry mob of Christians preparing to shot a group of Muslims in revenge, in the troubled area of Mindanao. "If you insist on killing our Muslim neighbors, you are going to have to kill me, too," he says. His act prevents any killing.

2003, Zimbabwe: Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) give valentines and roses to passers by as they march on Valentine's Day in different cities under the banner "Yes to love, No to violence". In Harare, when ordered to disperse by riot police, they sit on the pavement



and sing the national anthem. In Bulawayo marchers beat empty pots with cooking spoons to draw attention to food shortages. 15 women are arrested. Released the next day, they step out on to a pavement strewn with roses by supporters. WOZA is back on Mother's Day, sweeping the steps of the Parliament building, chanting "It's time to sweep away the violence!"

2004, France: Thousands of immigrant women join the demonstration the movement *Ni Putes, Ni Soumises* (NPNS—Neither Whores, Nor Submissive) organises in Paris on March 8 International Women's Day, to break the silence about gang rapes in housing projects and violence against migrant women.

2005, the Netherlands: Teun van de Keuken uses public interest in the film *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to raise awareness about the use of slave labour on chocolate plantations in Cote d'Ivoire. He produces a documentary *Tony and the Chocolate Factory*, tries to sue himself in Dutch courts for benefiting from slave labour by buying chocolate, and calls on the chocolate industry to certify that their candies are made from slave-free labour.

2005, Pakistan: to celebrate International Women's Day (March 8), Amnesty International/Pakistan organises a Stop Violence Against Women football match in Karachi, inviting sports celebrities, journalists, students and others to speak out against violence against women.

2005, Burma: A local military commander tries to imprison Mon ethnic minority leader Nai Sein Aye without evidence. The commander brings Nai to court, where judge Daw Win Win Htay releases him. Military officials order her three times to try Nai. She refuses each time. After threats and a fourth attempt by the military to try Nai, she resigns her job rather than imprison an innocent man.

2005, Tonga: Hundreds of women civil servants walk off their jobs to demand a living wage. They strike with their children outside the Prime Ministers office in Pangai si'i. By the strike's fifth week, hundreds of civil servants, church leaders and public supporters join them to urge the government to begin negotiations.

Circa 500 BCE, India: Mahaprajapati Gotami protests the Buddha's refusal (based on practical grounds) to ordain women in the new Buddhist religious order. In order to disprove popular prejudices that women are unfit for religious life, she renounces royal life, cuts her hair and leads 500 other women on a long march to where the Buddha is teaching. Arriving dusty and with swollen feet, the women find an ally in the male disciple Ananda. Ananda argues for women's ordination and, in a revolutionary act, the Buddha accepts the women as nuns.



---

258 BCE, Rome: plebians (common citizens who form the majority of fighters in the Roman army) leave Rome and refuse to work for days in order to protest the Senate's refusal to grant them certain civil rights. The Senate quickly grants the rights.

1552-53 CE/AD, France: scholar Étienne de La Boétie argues that tyranny can be overthrown non-violently if the majority withdraws its cooperation.

1849, USA: Henry David Thoreau is jailed after refusing to pay the Massachusetts poll tax levied for what he believes is an unjust war on Mexico. Urging others to follow his example, he writes *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*.

1850s, Brazil: women's newspapers like *O Jornal das Senhoras* (Ladies Journal) campaign for women's rights, including changes in marriage laws because marriage is "an unbearable tyranny".

1870, USA: anti-slavery activist Julia Ward Howe, after witnessing the slaughters of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian war, calls for a Mothers' Day for Peace in order to mobilise women for peace and reconciliation.

1890, Iran: women in the royal harem organise a successful tobacco strike and end the British stranglehold on tobacco production throughout the country.

1920, Germany: an attempted coup d'état against the Weimar Republic fails when the population go on general strike and refuse to cooperate with the new government.

1920s-1947, India: Gandhi leads a successful non-violent struggle to liberate India from British colonialism. Millions of ordinary Indians participate in tax resistance, boycotts, and building constructive alternatives to British rule. When Gandhi is jailed, women like Sarojini Naidu, who led the non-violent raid on the Dharasana salt works, take over. Gandhi opposes men's domination of women. India's 1947 Constitution guarantees equality between women and men.

1932, Switzerland: in an attempt to stop a war in Europe, pacifist women gather nine million signatures for peace and hold the International Women's Peace Conference in Geneva.

1942, Germany: Sophie Scholl and her brother Hans organise the White Rose resistance movement at the University of Munich. They distribute leaflets calling on their fellow students to condemn the Nazis and protest the murder of Jews. The Scholls are captured by the Gestapo and executed. Other German youth resist compulsory

membership in the Hitler youth corps or help to smuggle Jews out of Germany. The Swing Kids protest by listening and dancing to American jazz music.

*“Anything could be resistance, because everything was forbidden. Every activity represented resistance that created the impression that the prisoner retained something of his former personality and individuality.”* Andrea Devoto, Italian psychiatrist

1950s, South Africa: women mobilise in mass numbers to stop pass laws (the obligatory carrying of identity documents) which severely restrict free movement by blacks. The Defiance Campaign Against Unjust Laws is organised: 400 domestic workers go on strike in Johannesburg; 4,000 women block city streets in Pretoria; 20,000 women join a silent vigil and try to deliver an anti-pass petition of over 100,000 women’s signatures to the prime minister.

1955, USA: Black seamstress Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white rider and to move to the back of the bus, defying the law. African-Americans in Montgomery, Alabama boycott the bus company for over a year, until the laws change. Because of the boycott, the US Supreme Court outlaws racial segregation in public transport throughout the USA.

1966, Australia: aboriginal leader Vincent Lingiari organises Gurindji indigenous workers, who face unsafe and humiliating conditions, to walk-off the Wave Hill Station and to gain title to their land.

1972, Italy: women cashiers in a Naples department store go on a smile strike, refusing to smile at customers, until their demands for better salaries and working conditions are met.

1975, Iceland: 25,000 women gather in Reykjavik for a one-day, nationwide strike to protest women’s second class status. It is the largest demonstration in Iceland’s history. Shops run out of sausages as men struggle to cook family dinners during the strike.

1980, Poland: striking workers occupy the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. 3,000 women of the independent trade union movement Solidarnosc stare down tanks trying to enter the shipyard. In Katowice, women are beaten but successfully blockade a steel mill and prevent police from entering. Solidarnosc eventually demands political reform and pioneers the non-violent Velvet Revolutions of 1989, which saw Communist governments collapsing across Eastern Europe.

1986, Philippines: the non-violent People Power revolution ousts the Marcos dictatorship. Millions of Filipinos take to the streets. Widespread workshops in active non-violence lay the foundation for

the resistance to Marcos's attempt to steal the 1985 election. Thirty computer operators tabulating the election results publicly denounce the fraudulent official count. Opposition leader Corazon Aquino calls for non-violent rallies, vigils and civil disobedience. Clandestine radio broadcasts give instructions in non-violent resistance. When some military troops join the movement, civilians surround their barracks to protect them. Fighter pilots ordered to bomb the rebel barracks refuse after seeing the civilian crowds. Marcos flees after four days of civil disobedience.

*"We know that not one step, not one seed, not one action that is carried out in the spirit of non-violence is ever lost. It bears fruit in the history of nations and of the world."* Hildegard Goss-Mayr

1989, China: thousands of students and workers gather in Beijing to fast for democracy and an end to corruption. Popular support pressures government leaders to meet with students in a nationally televised meeting. The image of a lone man stopping a row of tanks on June 4 in Tiananmen Square galvanises international support for democratic reform.

1991, Russia: unarmed citizens flood the streets of Moscow, surround the Parliament building and block tanks, in order to defend Russian democracy from an attempted coup. Earlier in the year, the Lithuanian government mobilises citizens to form human barricades around their Parliament building when Soviet troops attack.

1992, Afghanistan: members of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan risk their lives to open underground schools for girls when the Taliban outlaws education for women and girls. RAWA starts clinics in refugee camps; smuggle endangered women out of the country and collect video documentation on human rights abuses. In Herat, women secretly publish and circulate poems and stories, keeping alive the city's rich literary tradition.

*"Fear is very much a habit...Fearlessness may be a gift but perhaps more precious is the courage acquired through endeavor, courage that comes from cultivating the habit of refusing to let fears dictate one's actions."* Aung San Suu Kyi.

1994, Israel/Palestine: Jerusalem Link is created when Israeli women from the feminist peace group Bat Shalom in West Jerusalem and Palestinian women from Jerusalem Center for Women in East Jerusalem decide to work together for peace. They organise rallies, dialogue groups and conferences and lobby governments and the United Nations to include women's voices in all peace negotiations.

1995, Nigeria: The Muslim imam Muhammed Ashafa and the Christian minister James Wuye, both former militants who incited violence against the other's community, meet together and agree to work for non-violence and peace. They start the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum to foster community understanding and tolerance.

1996, Pakistan: the rock band Junoon becomes a hit across South Asia, with songs condemning corruption and the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan. 50,000 fans at a concert in India greet them with banners reading, "We want cultural fusion, not nuclear fusion."

1996, England: Four women engage in direct non-violent action by entering a British Aerospace camp and taking hammers to a Hawk attack jet. They are protesting the government's sale of aircraft to Indonesia, who use the jets to suppress internal dissent and to maintain Indonesian control of East Timor. In court they argue that the Genocide Convention obligated them to prevent the sale of the weapons to Indonesia. The court acquits them of all counts of criminal damage to the plane.

1997, Israel: Four Israeli women gather at a street corner to protest the continuing Israeli military presence in Lebanon. They demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops and establish the Four Mothers Movement to work for this. Israeli troops withdraw from Lebanon in 2000.

1997, Northern Ireland: Neighborhood centers develop a mobile telephone network to check out rumors during times of tension and to support activists in the field who were investigating incident and crowds.

1999, Scotland: A mural is painted above the entrance to Polwarth Parish Church in Edinburgh, showing a screaming young woman, looking in terror at a hand holding a razor. The Rev. McMahon uses this and his sermons during Easter week to protest against female genital mutilation. Parishioners are shocked and demand the mural's removal. But a supporter says, "It is important for churches to use the space they have got for publicising things like this."

2000, Cambodia: the villagers of Prek Thnoat conduct a non-violent campaign to protect their livelihood. They confiscate trawlers who are over fishing the waters, and destroy a seaweed farm whose chemicals are killing the fish. The farm's owner issues death threats and takes five leaders to court. The entire village accompanies the leaders to court, despite attempts by police to blockade the road. When the judges

---

ask, "Why are you doing this?" villagers point to a baby and reply, for the sake of the children. The villagers ask to speak to the Governor, who promises to investigate the effects of the seaweed farm on the environment, and to delineate areas where trawlers are allowed.

2001, Liberia: Thousands of women march to the United Nations office in Monrovia to demand international support to end the conflict. The Liberian Women's Initiative organises many peace marches and workshops throughout the country.

2001, Israel/Palestine: Israeli women begin Machsom (Checkpoint Watch), gathering at Israeli army and border checkpoints to monitor and document soldiers treatment of Palestinians, and sometimes placing their bodies between soldiers drawing guns on Palestinians.

2002, Burundi: women lobby for representation during peace negotiations, facing male delegates who claim negotiating is no job for a woman. Women's groups organise a cry-in in front of the negotiation building. When male delegates ask the women why they are crying, they are told the women weep for all the war dead, for the loss of hope in the future, and for being denied a place at the negotiating table. After a briefing for male negotiators on gender and peace accords, many of the women's recommendations are included in the final agreement.

2002, Somalia: When male clan representatives at the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Djibouti refuse to allow women to enter negotiations because they do not represent a clan, the women form Somalia's 'sixth clan' — the clan of women. They are accepted as equal partners. In 2004 the chair of Save Somali Women and Children, Asha Hagi Elmi, becomes the first Somali woman to sign a Somali peace agreement.

2003, Nepal: School children collect thousands of signatures from children who want peace and present the signatures to government officials. They organise writing competitions and paint murals on school walls showing their visions for peace.

2003, USA: Career diplomat John Brady Kiesling, who had served in US embassies from Tel Aviv to Yerevan, resigns in protest to America's drift to war. "I am resigning because I have tried and failed to reconcile my conscience with my ability to represent the current US Administration," he writes.

2003, Palestine: International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activist Rachel Corrie, 23, is killed when she steps in front of an Israeli army bulldozer to stop housing demolitions in the Gaza Strip. ISM continues



to train volunteers to accompany Palestinian civil society and non-violently oppose the Israeli occupation.

2004, Venezuela: Linda Loaiza holds a two-week long hunger strike on the steps of the Supreme Court to demand a trial of the man who, three years earlier, held her prisoner and repeatedly raped her for four months. The court lets the rapist (the son of the president of a major Venezuelan university) off. The case is re-opened after an international letter writing campaign.

2005, Chad: Journalists begin a one-week news blackout to protest the imprisonment of four colleagues and to draw international attention to what one striking reporter calls the “creeping dictatorship” of President Idriss Deby. All but one of Chad’s private newspapers stop work and some private radio stations cut news transmissions after four journalists were thrown in prison, accused of various offences including defaming Deby.

## COALITION OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

### INTRODUCTION

The Coalition of Women for Peace has become one of the leading voices in Israel advocating for a just and viable peace between Israel and Palestine ever since its founding in November 2000, just six weeks after the current Intifada began.

The Coalition brings together independent women and nine women’s peace organisations, some newly formed and others promoting coexistence since the founding of the state of Israel. We are a mix of Jewish and Palestinian women (all citizens of Israel), and we take action to amplify the voices of women calling for peace and justice for all inhabitants of the region.

### OUR PRINCIPLES

The Coalition of Women for Peace seeks to mobilise women in support of human rights and a just peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as we work to strengthen democracy within Israel. Our principles:

- An end to the occupation.
- The full involvement of women in negotiations for peace.
- Establishment of the state of Palestine side-by-side with the state of Israel based on the 1967 borders.
- Recognition of Jerusalem as the shared capital of two states.



- 
- Israel must recognise its share of responsibility for the results of the 1948 war, and cooperate in finding a just solution for the Palestinian refugees.
  - Opposition to the militarism that permeates Israeli society.
  - Equality, inclusion and justice for Palestinian citizens of Israel.
  - Equal rights for women and all residents of Israel.
  - Social and economic justice for Israel's citizens, and integration in the region.

### WHAT WE DO

In addition to supporting the work of its member organisations, the Coalition carries out mass rallies, human rights campaigns, outreach, and advocacy activity.

Twice a year, the Coalition holds mass rallies calling for an end to the occupation. In one, thousands of Israeli and Palestinian women marched through the streets under the banner "We Refuse to be Enemies". We held a Concert for Peace, with Israeli and Palestinian performers. In May 2003, one thousand Coalition women dressed in black lay down in a large public plaza of Tel Aviv under the banner, 'The Occupation is Killing Us All'. We have also mobilised women in 150 locations on five continents to hold solidarity vigils during these major events.

The Coalition has provided emergency supplies to women and children in refugee camps, and school supplies to thousands of Palestinian children. Together with Palestinian women, we recently completed the International Human Rights March of Women, marching for 3 weeks in Israel and Palestine and calling for an end to the occupation and creation of a just peace between our peoples.

With the escalation of violence over recent years, it has become harder and harder for peace movements in Israel to rally public support. Nevertheless, the Coalition has persisted, both independently and in collaboration with others, and believes that peace is possible and that women have a key role in making it happen.



# ONLINE STUDY MATERIALS ON INTERFAITH, RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

**Awareness and Capsule Course**  
**offered under the aegis of Asian Chapter**  
**IAEWP's ONLINE PEACE EDUCATION,**  
**RECONSTRUCTION, ACCORD, NON-VIOLENCE**  
**AND DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE (OPERANDI)**

## ***Board of Editors***

Dr. Priyaranjan Trivedi  
Dr. Uttam Kumar Singh  
Dr. Markandey Rai  
Dr. Shyamnarayan Pandey  
Dr. Akshay Kumar Nayak



**Online Peace Education, Reconstruction, Accord,  
Non-Violence and Disarmament Initiative (OPERANDI)**  
**International Association of Educators for World Peace**  
**NGO Affiliate of United Nations – ECOSOC, UNDPI**  
**Headquarters : Huntsville, Alabama, USA**

## **CONTENTS**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 51. Introductory Overview of Interfaith Relations and Organisations                          | 2369 |
| 52. Case Study: Conference on Non-violent Civilian Protection and Associated Institutions    | 2453 |
| 53. Other Initiatives and Institutions Working on Guidelines for Better Interfaith Relations | 2629 |