

2004 Parliament of the World's Religions Symposium on Interfaith Education

The Work & Goals of the Symposium

Many educators have begun to ask where education is taking us and how it is addressing the critical issues of our time. The forces of globalization have produced a new religious pluralism and cultural multiplicity throughout the globe. Moreover, within this interdependent world, a global climate of religious mistrust and animosity has developed— a climate that has spawned intolerance, discrimination, and even violence. Today a growing number of educators, practitioners, and religious leaders are turning to interfaith education as a means of illuminating and responding to these challenges of the 21st century.

Interfaith education enables us to learn about religious traditions other than their own, while also deepening our understanding of our own traditions, engaging both the commonalities that bring us together and the particularities that make us distinct. Moreover, interfaith education offers the capacity for profound personal and societal growth, which is essential to fostering and sustaining cultures of peace.

The purpose of this symposium is to identify both the promising and problematic features of interfaith education, explore the multiple contexts in which it exists, ask how it can address the most pressing issues of our time, and consider the transformative potential it has to offer. While many organizations that work with interfaith education exist, the support structures that would connect them as a field and lend coherence and momentum for growth need to be strengthened. This symposium endeavors to create an interactive forum through which educators and practitioners can navigate the complex landscape of interfaith education by building networks, sharing resources and support, and collaboratively addressing the challenges necessary to developing this nascent field.

The Symposium on Interfaith Education, is part of a multi-year collaborative endeavor, sponsored by the Consultation for Interfaith Education: Auburn Theological Seminary, ARIL/CrossCurrents, Cobb & Associates, CLAL—the National Jewish Center for Leadership and Learning, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, International Association for Religious Freedom, the International Mahavir Jain Mission, the Interfaith Community, the Loretto Community, the Muslim Women's Institute for Research and Development, and the Temple of Understanding. For more information on this project, see www.globalinterfaithed.org.

Program Description

Day 1: Pathways to Peace—The Multiple Contexts of Interfaith Education

Within the broad scope of interfaith education lie the methods of the classroom, the academy, and the seminary, alongside the restorative practices of dialogue and community building among people of diverse religious backgrounds. In each of these contexts, interfaith education has distinctive characteristics and challenges that will be explored this first day. H.H. the XIVth Dalai Lama, who has promoted interfaith education for many years, will give the keynote address.

8:00 – 9:00 am **Jain Meditation with Munishree Kirtiji, India**

CCIB A revolutionary Jain monk from Shanti Niketan Sadhana Kendra ashram in Gujarat , Kirtiji has taught the scientific methods of Patanjali yoga and Jain meditation to thousands of peoples in India, U.S.A., Canada, and France.

9:30 - 10:00 **Opening Ceremony: Gathering of the Community**
CCIB

10:00 – 11:00 **Interfaith Education: A Global Imperative**
CCIB

Panelists:

- **Dame Dr. Prof. Maher Master-Moos, India**
Dr. Master-Moos, the Founder and President of the only Zoroastrian College in the world in Mumbai, India, is the recipient of the Dag Hammarskjöld Award (1968) and the Medal for Inter Faith Peace by HH Pope John Paul II (1989).
- **Dr. Betty A. Reardon, U.S.**
Dr. Reardon is the founding Director of the Peace Education Center at Teachers College Columbia University in New York and founder and General Coordinator of the International Institutes on Peace Education.
- **Dr. Heidi Hadsell, U.S.**
Dr. Hadsell is the President of Hartford Seminary in Hartford, CT. She came to the Seminary from the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, Bossey, Switzerland, where she served as Director.

11:30 – 1:00 **Keynote address: His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, Tibet**
Auditorium, Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet, the spiritual and Edifici temporal leader of the Tibetan people, has received many international awards, Forum including the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize.

Respondents:

- **Dr. Leo D. Lefebure, U.S.**
Dr. Lefebure is an associate professor of theology at Fordham University in New York City. He is the author of four books, including *The Buddha and the Christ* (1993) and *Revelation, the Religions, and Violence* (2000).
- **Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh, U.K.**
Bhai Sahib Singh is the Chairman of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, member of the European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL/WCRP), and advisor to the Sikh Heritage Trust (Anandpur Sahib).

3:00 – 4:30 **Discovering the Best of Interfaith Education through Appreciative Inquiry**
Sagrada This interactive session, facilitated by Appreciative Inquiry pioneer Diana Whitney, Familia, will allow participants and presenters to learn about and share their work in interfaith AC Barcelona education through a process of small group dialogue.

Day 2: The Power of Commitment—Interfaith Education, Community & Justice

Interfaith education offers an essential tool for creating cultures of peace. On this second day, we explore how interfaith education addresses religious and social conflict and the histories of violence and oppression found within many of our religious traditions, as well as the potential religions have to offer the peace building process.

8:00 – 9:00 **Jewish Meditation with Eliyahu McLean, Israel**

- CCIB McLean is the Coordinator of the Jerusalem Circle, a network of spiritual peace activists in Israel/Palestine. An Orthodox Jew, he has traveled worldwide with Palestinian Muslim Ibrahim Abuelhawa to promote dialogue.
- 9:30 – 11:00 **Keynote address: Madhu Kishwar, India**
 CCIB Kishwar is a senior fellow at the Centre for Studies in Developing Societies in New Delhi, India. She is the author of many books, including *Religion at the Service of Nationalism and Other Essays* and founding editor of the journal *Manushi*.
- Respondents:**
- **Dr. Al-Harith A.H. Hassan Al-Asady, Iraq**
 Dr. Hassan, Dean of Psychological Research Center, Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research, in Baghdad, Iraq, also teaches courses in comparative religions at Babel College of Philosophy and Theology.
 - **Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, U.S.**
 An ordained Orthodox rabbi, Hirschfield is Vice-President of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning & Leadership. A commentator on issues of spirituality and public policy featured on ABC, he is currently at work on a book about new ways of commemorating the Holocaust.
 - **Paul F. Knitter, U.S.**
 For the past 40 years, Paul F. Knitter, Emeritus Professor of Theology at Xavier University (USA) has been working to promote a globally responsible dialogue among religions.
- 11:30 - 12:15 **Interactive Best Practice Session: The Relationship between Interfaith Education and Justice, Conflict Resolution, Reconciliation and Coexistence**
Sants Room
- **“Interfaith Education for World Peace”**
Ela Gandhi, University of Natal, South Africa
 - **“Interfaith Education in Action: A Young Adult Perspective”**
Morse Flores, Philippines, & Ramola Sundram, U.K., Religious Freedom Young Adult Network
- Eixample Room**
- **“Tools for Conflict Transformation in Interfaith Dialogue”**
Janice Marie Johnson, Educators for Social Responsibility, U.S.
 - **Interfaith Education in Regions of Conflict:**
 A facilitated dialogue among participants to share curriculum, explore specific challenges and network with colleagues
- Gracia Room**
- **“Beyond Hate: Living With Our Deepest Differences in Northern Ireland”**
Sr. Deirdre Mullan, RSM & Carol Rittner, RSM, Mercy Global Concern, Ireland
 - **Interfaith Education in Regions of Coexistence:**
 A facilitated dialogue among participants to share curriculum, explore specific challenges and network with colleagues
- 3:00 – 4:30 **Interfaith Education in a Violent World**

Sagrada
Familia

Panel & Dialogue

Panelists:

- **Sheik Abu Bakarr Conteh, Sierra Leone**
Sheik Conteh is the Chief Imam of three mosques in Freetown, Sierra Leone, as well as a Senior Lecturer in Religious and Moral Education at Freetown Teachers' College.
- **Danielle Celermajer, Australia**
Celermajer is a fellow at Columbia University's Center for the Study of Human Rights and former director of policy with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in Australia.
- **Toh Swee Hin, Australia**
Prof. Toh is the founding Director of the Griffith University Multi-Faith Centre in Brisbane, Australia, a consultant for UNESCO and the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding, and recipient of the 2000 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

Day 3: The Wisdom of Listening-- Interfaith Education & Transformation

On this day, we address the contemplative aspect of interfaith education and the role of personal transformation. We explore the challenges that experiential pedagogical practices pose, ask how the experience of another religious tradition influences one's religious identity, and consider the risks and rewards involved.

8:00 – 9:00

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Yoga Prayer: Embodied Christian Spiritual Practice with Fr. Thomas Ryan, U.S.

Fr. Ryan directs the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. He is the co-founder and former director of Unitas in Montreal, an ecumenical center for spirituality and Christian meditation.

9:30 – 11:00

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Keynote address: **Raimon Panikkar, Spain**

Dr. Panikkar, the son of a Hindu Indian father and a Roman Catholic Spanish mother, holds doctorates in philosophy, chemistry, and theology. Among his major books are *The Vedic Experience*; *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*; *Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics*; *The Cosmotheandric Experience*; and *Blessed Simplicity*.

Respondents:

- **Rita M. Gross, U.S.**
Gross is Professor of Comparative Studies in Religion at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire and the author of numerous articles and essays on women and religion.
- **Ibrahim Abdil-Mu'id Ramey, U.S.**
Ramey, coordinator of the Peace and Disarmament program of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, is a regular commentator on the Islamic Broadcasting Network and the 2002 co-recipient of the first Better World Award for activism from the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation.
- **Mark Larrimore, U.S.**
Larrimore is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Eugene Lang College, New School University in New York.

- 11:30 – 1:00 **Interactive Best Practice Session: The Challenges and Rewards of Experiential Interfaith Education**
Sants Room
- **“Education in Europe: Interfaith Dialogue in the Classroom”**
Jenny Banks Bryer, GERFEC, U.K.
 - **“Primary Education for Peace, Human Unity and Harmony Among Peoples”**
Kiran Vyas, Tapovan/Adi Shakti—Center of Integral Yoga & Ayurveda, France
- Eixample Room**
- **“Youth Interfaith Education Initiative”**
Dr. Eboo Patel, Interfaith Youth Core, U.S.
 - **“Building Bridges through Multi-faith Education”**
Stacy Fagan & Rajinderjit K. Singh, Long Island Multi-faith Forum, U.S.
- Gracia Room**
- **“The Dilemmas of Interfaith Studies in a ‘Secular’ University”**
Dr. David Cheetham, University of Birmingham, U.K.
 - **“Values, Ethics, Religion and Spirituality: What Are We Talking About?”**
Pilar Queta Colomina, Spain, & Diane Tillman, U.S., Living Values Education
- 3:00 – 4:00 **Visioning for the Future: Where Do We Go from Here?**
 Sagrada **A collaborative workshop planning how we will work together in the future**
 Familia
- 4:00 – 5:00 **One World: A Celebration of Global Values through Interfaith Education**
 Sagrada The symposium closes with the stunning visual & rhythmic sounds of the Taiko
 Familia Drums and sacred music by Carman Moore, whose compositions have been
 commissioned by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Lincoln Center for the
 Performing Arts, where his Mass for the 21st Century was premiered. Alison Van
 Dyk, Chair of the Temple of Understanding and Dr. Karan Singh, International
 Chair of the TOU, present the 7th Juliet Hollister Award to:
- **Dr. Hans Kung**
 Dr. Kung is a Professor of Ecumenical Theology, University of Tübingen, and the President of the Foundation for a Global Ethic. He was the drafter of “The Declaration toward a Global Ethic of the Parliament of the World’s Religions” in 1993.
 - **Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan**
 Pir Vilayat is the eldest son and successor of Hazrat Pir-o-Mursid Inayat Khan, founder of the Sufi Order in the West. His teaching brings the timeless contributions of the ancient Sufi mystics and poets together with the discoveries of psychology and science.