



2004 Parliament of the World's Religions Summary Report

Challenges and Opportunities for the
International Interreligious Movement



Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment

July 7-13, 2004
Barcelona, Spain

Words in Favor of Peace

From the midst of this silence I proclaim hope, peace is not a gift nor an unattainable summit but the starting over of many springtimes, the will and risk of loving and understanding.

D'aquest silenci estant proclamo l'esperança, la pau no és un do ni un cim inasolible sinó el recomençar de moltes primaveres, la voluntat i el risc d'estimar i de comprendre.

Desde este silencio proclamo la esperanza la paz no es un don ni una cumbre inalcanzable sino la vuelta a empezar de muchas primaveras, la voluntad y el riesgo de amar y de comprender.

—Miquel Martí i Pol



The Parliament Experience

The 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions—one of the world's largest and most inclusive interreligious events—welcomed 9,000 participants from 74 countries to the site of Barcelona's Universal Forum of Cultures. This unique gathering, held July 7-13, was organized by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions in partnership with the Universal Forum of Cultures—Barcelona 2004 and in association with the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia. People of faith, spirit and goodwill came together to encounter the rich diversity of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, listen to each other with open hearts and minds, dialogue for mutual understanding, reflect on the critical issues facing the world and commit to discovering new pathways to peace.

The goals of the 2004 Parliament were to:

Deepen our spirituality and experience personal transformation

“Here on earth we try to establish friendship with our fellow human beings. Sometimes we are successful, sometimes we are not. But even when we are successful, this friendship does not satisfy us completely. Then we go deep within and discover our Eternal Friend, God, the Inner Pilot. God and each individual on earth are eternal friends. But only when we begin to aspire do we come to realize this truth.”

—Sri Chinmoy,
Spiritual Leader

Recognize the humanity of the other and broaden our sense of community

“My faith tradition tells me that to have a “tolerant” society is to demean society. If I say that I will tolerate you, I am demeaning you. If I say that I will accept you, I am still demeaning you. Now if I was to say, ‘I will respect you,’ that would be slightly better. But what if I said, ‘I will lay down my life for you!’? You have to try and have that kind of spirit of sacrifice.”

—Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh,
Chairman, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha

Foster mutual understanding and respect

“The Parliament of the World's Religions is a unique event, bringing together a very impressive number of people from all different parts of the world and from different religions, and part of its importance is a demonstration that religion does not have to be the problem, but should be.”

—Rabbi David Rosen
Honorary President of the International Council of Christians and Jews



Learn to live in harmony in the midst of diversity

“And so the Parliament has proven to me that people from different faith traditions can actually relate to one another, they can find common ground on the subterranean truths that run under those diverse traditions. And out of virtues like humility and respect, we can live in harmony. Not necessarily unity, but we can get closer to what Martin Luther King Jr., called the beloved community, the world house. The Parliament is a civil community, and in that, it is a microcosm of the future world civilization.”

— Rev. Lawrence Carter

Dean of Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel Morehouse College

Seek peace, justice and sustainability

“I think the religious traditions have been lagging behind what’s actually going on in the world today. There’s been a tremendous emphasis on spiritual development, on morality, as it relates to how to deal with other people, but there’s been very little emphasis on living in harmony with nature, on what I’ve learned so clearly from the chimps: that there isn’t a sharp line dividing humans from the rest of the animal kingdom. It’s no good just talking about spiritual development unless it’s in the context of caring for the environment.”

— Jane Goodall

Primatologist

Actively work for a better world

“I think that it is important that people from all faiths focus on something that affects everybody and water is one of the most critical things that is part of every living thing and it deserves to be talked about, not only in policy but in religion...it is important that religious leaders be the first ones to bring this forward and call attention to it.”

— Dr. Jennie Joe

Director of the Native American Research and Training Center at the University of Arizona



Parliament Programs

The 2004 Parliament offered over 450 programs, lectures, dialogues, workshops, symposia, performances and exhibits. These offerings reflected a wide range of religious and spiritual traditions and guiding institutions including government business, labor, education, media, science, intergovernmental organizations and organizations of civil society. Presenters were emerging and well-known leaders, activists, scholars and experts. Programs and presenters were carefully balanced in terms of gender, region and format. Each day was organized around three pivotal dynamics that animate the interreligious movement:

The **intra-religious** track provided an opportunity to learn about the teachings, practices and dynamics of a wide variety of religious and spiritual communities and the resources and rationales from within these traditions for interreligious cooperation. Intra-religious programs included:

- Struggle for the Soul of Islam
- Bahá'í Theological Basis for Interreligious Dialogue
- Community of Christ: Maintaining Identity in a Diverse World
- Collective Rituals of the Haudenosaunee Tribe
- Teaching of Sincerity: A Shinto Pathway to Peace
- The Global Faces of Buddhism
- Judaism and Justice
- Native People and Environmental Justice
- Zoroastrian History, Religion, Culture and Present Day Challenges
- The Art of War/ the Tao of Peace
- A Holistic Jain Approach to Peace with Reference to the Role of Women
- How to Facilitate Intra-religious Dialogue

The **interreligious** track focused on structured opportunities for dialogue with a wide range of panel discussions from a variety of religious and spiritual perspectives. Interreligious programs included:

- Praying Together?
- Do We Need Religion in Order to Have Stable Ethics?
- Peace Initiatives to Bridge the Hindu-Muslim Divide
- Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on Communal Responses to Social and Environmental Violence
- Does the Media Promote Interreligious Dialogue?
- Interreligious Dialogue and Non-Negotiable Dogmas
- Mahatma Gandhi and Religious Pluralism
- Faith and Economics: What is the Bottom Line?



Dialoguing in the Midst of Violence: An Experience of Islam-Christian Dialogue in Mindanao
Pagan Dialogue Inside and Outside of the Circle
Middle East Stories: The Significance of the Holy Land in Our Sacred Texts
Interfaith Encounters: Marriages, Child Rearing, Funerals and Other Practical Concerns

The **engagement** track featured an exemplary selection of successful projects and initiatives that are making a difference around the world. Sessions helped to build capacity for effective dialogue and collaboration. Engagement programs included:

Building Peace in the Midst of Conflict
Millennium Development Goals: Fostering a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development
Hungry for More: Raising Religious Voices on the Question of Global Consumerism
Ford Interfaith Network: A model for faith in corporate workplaces
The Headscarf Debate: Religious Dress and Secular Fundamentalism
Proselytization and Religious Freedom
How can Religious Communities be Engaged in Fair Trade
Challenges Facing Sikh Identity
Microcredit for Interreligious Community Development
Religious Values and Social Activism
Designing Interfaith Sacred Space
American Indian Religious Freedom Act
Peace Over the Korean Peninsula:
The Reconciling Role of Faith Communities in the History of Confrontational and South Korea



Other Program Offerings

Symposia

Spanning multiple days, 15 different symposia gave participants an opportunity to explore topics in more depth with leading international scholars and practitioners.

Performances

Participants enjoyed a stimulating array of 28 musical, theatrical and dance performances.

Exhibits

Over 70 booths provided information on service organizations, educational institutions and cultural groups.

Art Gallery

The Parliament Art Gallery offered the visions of 21 artists from around the world providing fresh, new experiences that explored diverse religious and cultural expressions.

Films

A remarkable series of interactive filmcentered programs offered screenings of 16 exceptional, rarely-seen documentaries and world premieres followed by discussions with religious leaders, producers and directors.

Morning Observances

Participants were invited to observe or engage in over 100 religious and spiritual practices, meditations, prayers and reflections from a wide variety of traditions.

Open Space

Held each evening, Open Space was a flexible, informal time for participants to extend the conversations that were begun earlier in the day, form a discussion group around areas of shared interest or explore a topic in greater depth.

Parliament Academy

The Parliament Academy was a series of gatherings, programs and discussions geared to participating students and faculty from over 30 colleges, universities and seminaries.

Partner Cities

Sponsored by the Goldin Institute for International Partnership and Peace, activists and religious leaders involved in their Partner Cities Network shared best practices for grassroots organizing.

Off-Site Programs

Opportunities to observe the rich cultural and religious heritage of Spanish Cata-



lonia included tours of Sagrada Familia, a Buddhist temple, museums and local places of worship and spiritual practice.

Speakers Corner and Solidarity Fair

This interactive forum brought together local, national and international non-profits, community organizations and educational institutions to explore how individuals can become involved in local peace efforts and connect with others engaged in similar efforts around the world.

Symposia included:

Crisis of the Holy: An Interreligious Think-Tank of the Elijah Interfaith Institute
Interfaith Education
Interfaith Peacebuilding Skills
The New Awareness Summit
Religion and Conflict Resolution
A Dialogue of Civilizations: Islam and the West in Quest of a Just and Peaceful World
Religions and International Institutions
Religion and Human Rights: Towards a Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions
Exploring the Face of AIDS
Science and Religion
Towards an Interreligious and Intercultural Theology of Liberation
The Future of Religion, the Media and Our Communities
Digital Storytelling and Appreciative Inquiry as Tools for Peace-Building
Abrahamic Reunion: Peacemaking in the Holy Land
Interreligious Organizing



Parliament Plenaries

Celebrating the 2004 Parliament theme of Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment, the evening plenary gatherings were filled with beauty and inspiration. Plenaries featured greetings, blessings and keynote addresses from revered religious and spiritual leaders, as well as sacred observances, celebrations and performances.

Opening Plenary–Wednesday, July 7

The 2004 Parliament opened with an outdoor procession that included the dedication of a World Peace Pole, the lighting of a World Peace Flame and the ceremonial planting of a Tree of Peace by Chief Jake Swamp of the Mohawk Nation. Inside the Forum Auditorium, the 2004 Parliament officially convened with offerings from inspiring leaders and artists from around the world.

“...Religion should not divorce itself from public life. We have to take a stance. It is a risk because we may make a mistake, but we have to commit to one thing or another.”

—Raimon Panikkar
Catalonian philosopher

Barcelona Plenary–Thursday, July 8

This evening celebrated Barcelona's embrace of a new approach to religious and spiritual diversity. It also highlighted the transformative contributions of the local interreligious movement to Catalan society and the Parliament gathering. Featured were a performance of the Catalan Peace Anthem by Jordi Savall, testimonials by local interreligious practitioners, and a display of the Catalan Human Tower.

“We do not want an imposed peace, a peace full of fears...All we want is fair peace. Peace doesn't fall the sky. We have to build it.”

—Joan Clos
Former Mayor of Barcelona

The International Plenary–Monday, July 12

Recognition of the worldwide interreligious movement, the Parliament highlighted the contribution of religious and spiritual communities to a just, peaceful and sustainable future. The inaugural Carus Award for Outstanding Contributions to the International Interreligious Movement was given to the Acholi Religious' Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) for its courageous work for reconciliation in the midst of the civil war in northern Uganda.



Closing Plenary—Tuesday, July 13

The healing power of religious and interreligious responses to a world gripped by need and fear brought the 2004 Parliament experience to a somber yet hopeful close. Young people publicly shared their commitment to work for peace upon their return home. A concluding moment of silence expressed remembrance for victims of the tragic March 11, 2004 train bombing in Madrid and solidarity with victims of terror everywhere.

“Our security can only come by using our national wealth...for the health and welfare of our people. We should take our example from leaders... whose first thoughts are not violence, but healing, not vengeance, but compassion.”

—Dharma Master Hsin Tao
Museum of World Religions, Taipei

Sacred Music Concert

Held at the famous Sagrada Familia Temple, the Sacred Music Concert was a symbol of the Parliament experience itself: diverse religious and spiritual communities sharing their distinctive traditions through music, movement, meditation and chant in an exhilarating display of harmony.

Evening Programs

Communities Night

The religious and spiritual communities of Barcelona extended a warm and gracious welcome to members of their own traditions from around the world. Parliament participants were invited to “feel at home” and share in an opportunity for dialogue, observances and hospitality with local members.

Regional Night

Hosted in partnership with the United Religions Initiative, the regional night offered Parliament participants an opportunity to meet and dialogue with others from their home region. An accompanying Interreligious Bazaar enabled organizations to share their work through a variety of exhibits.



Parliament by the Sea

This unique venue offered four experiences open to Parliament and Barcelona Forum participants alike.

Sikh Celebration

2004 was the 400 year anniversary of the establishment of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the Sikh scriptures). In honor of this and other significant Sikh anniversaries, Guru Nanak Niskam Sewak Jatha—a prominent Sikh community based in the United Kingdom— established a major venue for celebration, education and hospitality. A memorable experience for all Parliament participants was the daily offering of langar—a blessed vegetarian meal. Three hundred Sikh volunteers traveled to Barcelona to provide over 6,000 meals each day.

Sacred Space

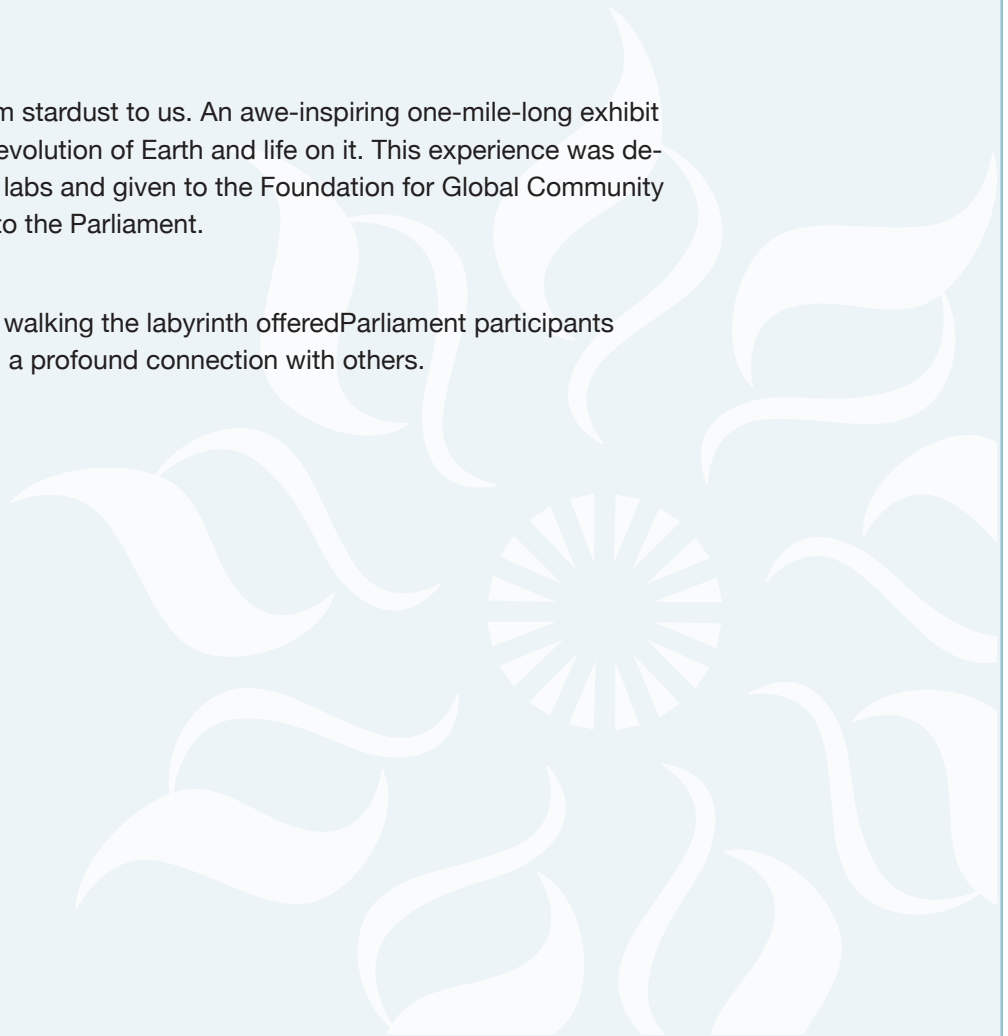
The “sacred space” was used by a variety of religious and spiritual communities for contemplation, meditation, chanting and prayer. This space was ringed by a “sacred carpet of flowers” exhibit created by the Accio Civica Calderina of Caldes de Montbui, Spain.

Walk through Time

A walk throughout time...from stardust to us. An awe-inspiring one-mile-long exhibit depicted the 4.6 billion year evolution of Earth and life on it. This experience was developed by Hewlett-Packard labs and given to the Foundation for Global Community in California, who brought it to the Parliament.

Labyrinth

A form of ancient spirituality, walking the labyrinth offered Parliament participants time for quiet meditation and a profound connection with others.





2004 Parliament Assembly

The 2004 Parliament Assembly at the Benedictine Monastery at Montserrat near Barcelona represented the next step in the progression of gatherings that began with the first Parliament in 1893 and continued in 1993 in Chicago and 1999 in Cape Town. Four hundred religious and spiritual leaders, eminent scholars, grassroots activists, influential persons from guiding institutions and young people from around the world convened at the 2004 Parliament Assembly at Montserrat to focus on four global crises of human suffering:

- Supporting refugees world-wide
- Overcoming religiously motivated violence
- Eliminating international debt in poor countries
- Increasing access to clean water

Joining persons impacted by these issues in the discussion, Assembly members worked towards the creative engagement of religious and spiritual communities with other guiding institutions to make constructive and effective contributions to these crises. Assembly members were asked to commit to “simple and profound acts” in response to these crises. These acts both help alleviate the suffering and actively involve their own local communities and institutions in visceral and multivalent ways. By the end of the gathering, over 500 commitments to “simple and profound acts” were collected. At the heart of the process, participants examined the issues from the perspective of the teachings, wisdom and practices of their own traditions:

What in their own tradition compels and inspires them to care about this issue?

How does the strategy for social change, embedded in the vision and teachings of one's own tradition, shape their response?

2004 Parliament by the Numbers

8,996 participants from 75 countries

Afghanistan, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Rwanda, Scotland, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



Daily Schedule

450 programs with 962 presenters

Time	Session	Theme	Format
8:00-9:00	Morning Observance	Experiences of religious and spiritual observances, meditations and prayer.	Meditations, prayers, reflections
9:30-9:30	Break	<i>Time to move between programs and for informal conversations</i>	
9:30-11:00	Session A: "Religious and Spiritual Communities Share Their Stories"	A wide variety of programs focusing on: (1) a basic understanding of religious and spiritual communities, and the teachings, practices and dynamics of their traditions; (2) resources and rationales from within religious and spiritual communities and movements for dialogue, engagement and cooperation; and (3) tools for intrareligious reflection and dialogue.	Intrareligious: Primarily single-tradition panel presentations
11:00-11:30	Break	<i>Time to move between programs and for informal conversations</i>	
11:30-1:00	Session B: "Religious and Spiritual Communities Dialogue with Each Other"	A wide variety of programs focusing on: (1) structured opportunities for interreligious encounter and dialogue; (2) sharing the convictions and motivations for engaging with each other and the world; and, (3) innovative methodologies for interreligious encounter, dialogue and cooperation.	Interreligious: Primarily multiple-tradition panel presentations and facilitated dialogues
1:00-3:00	Lunch Break	<i>Time for enjoying performances and informal dialogue on the baechfront setting</i>	
3:00-4:30	Session C: "Religious and Spiritual Communities Work Together"	A wide variety of programs focusing on: (1) building capacity for religious and spiritual people, communities and organizations to collaborate with guiding institutions in service to a peaceful, just and sustainable future; (2) examples of successful programs and best practices that are addressing critical issues around the world; and (3) creative approaches and tools for effective dialogue and collaboration.	Engagement: Primarily facilitated dialogues, workshops and multi-religious panels
4:30-5:00	Break	<i>Time to move between programs and for informal conversations</i>	
5:00-6:30	Open Space/ Gatherings	Free time or opportunity to engage with participants from around the world on topics of special interest through facilitated "open space" dialogue and working sessions. Spaces are also available for meetings of groups, organizations, and delegations.	Encounter: Open space, dialogues
7:00-8:30	Break	<i>Time to move to plenary space</i>	
7:00-8:30	Plenary	Plenary sessions and large group gatherings.	Celebration: Arts & evocative presentations



Thank You!

The 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions was made possible by the combined commitment, time, energy, and resources of countless individuals, organizations, religious and spiritual communities and donors. The Council extends its special thanks to the following:

The Universal Forum of Cultures–Barcelona 2004
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The Office of the Abbot of Montserrat
The City of Barcelona
The Generalitat of Catalonia
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Presenters and All Participants
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Iberdrolla Corporation
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Mrs. Marjorie Reed
Mr. Nate Shapiro
Bahá'í International Community
Mr. Robert Asher and Ms. Maureen Schoenbeck
Sir Sigmund Sternberg
Mr. Don Benson and Mrs. Helen Spector
Ms. Jill Darrow Setzer
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Mrs. Mary Abbott Hess
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Torres Wines of Spain
Foundation for Global Community

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Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges and Opportunities for the Interreligious Movement

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions is proud to stand with a myriad of local, regional and international organizations and initiatives that serve religious and spiritual communities in their pursuit of a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. In hosting the 2004 Parliament in Barcelona, the Council grappled with many challenges that all in the interreligious movement face when seeking to realize aspirations for the future.

How can a global movement be truly global?

Face-to-face encounters at events like a Parliament are crucial to building bridges of understanding and cooperation. Yet even with the diversity apparent at the 2004 Parliament in Barcelona, it was equally clear that friends and colleagues from around the world were missing from the conversation, as the costs associated with registration fees, travel and accommodations make such gatherings impossible for many. How can we insure that the voices we often need to hear the most are not silenced by their absence?

How can local to global connections be made effective?

In order to be effective, the interreligious movement needs to connect grassroots work to systemic change. Short-term fixes for problems at the local level can often only treat the symptoms but not the underlying causes. Still, analyzing the underlying causes of systemic problems through position papers and declarations at international gatherings can take years, while people suffer today. How can action at the grassroots level inform and catalyze meaningful systemic change?

How can identities remain unique in the midst of diversity?

The paradox of interreligious dialogue is that it both broadens personal horizons and deepens the commitment to one's own tradition. Nevertheless, the process of encounter and dialogue is inevitably fraught with anxiety and fear. The interreligious movement must provide open and safe forums in which to grapple with these crucial questions: How do I understand my identity in the midst of diversity? What religious convictions are non-negotiable? How should we treat those who believe or practice in different ways?

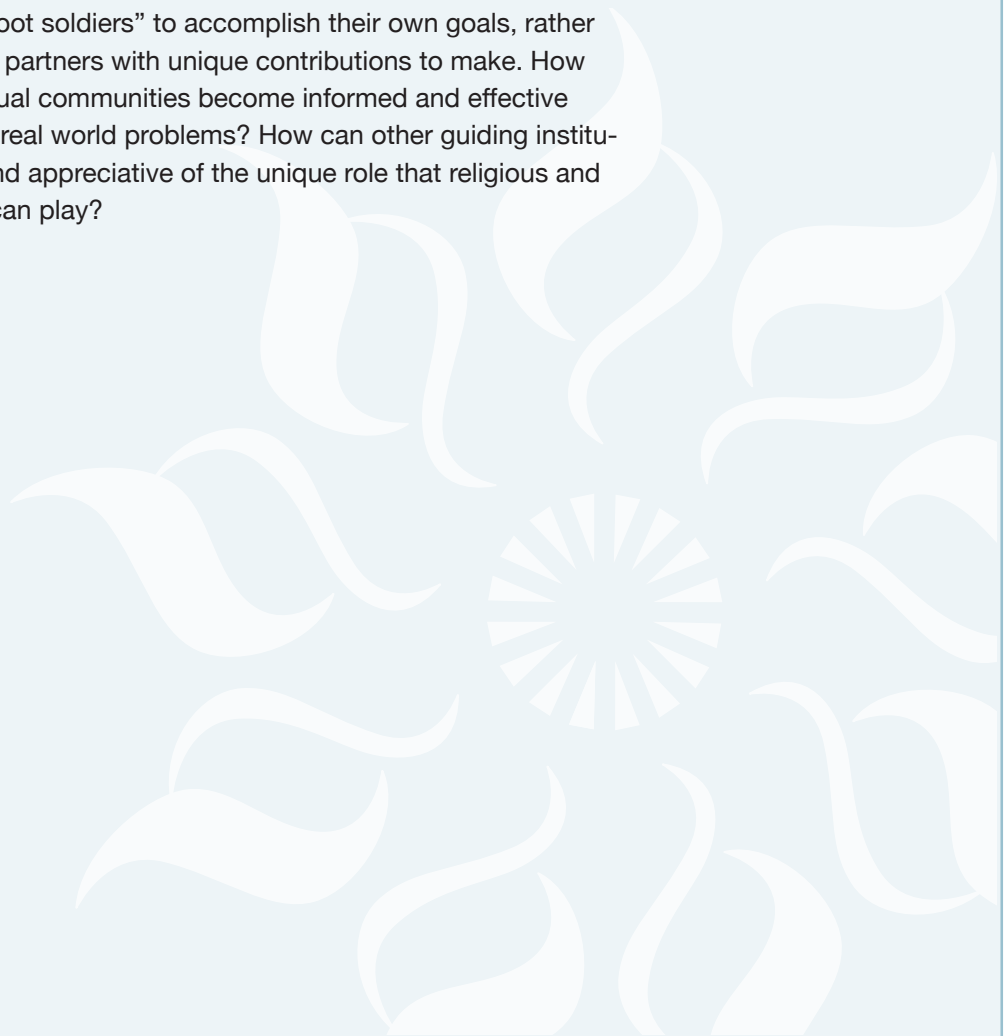


How can spirituality and social action be connected?

One response to a world full of suffering people is that we must begin with ourselves, with our own spiritual transformation. If we can change our own hearts and minds, we can change the world. Another response is that we must urgently address suffering through social action. But will social action not grounded in a broader spiritual or ethical framework inevitably substitute one ill or ideology for another? Do we have to start in one place or the other? Is this merely a balancing act, or is there a dynamic way to engage both spirituality and action?

How can religious and spiritual communities work with other guiding institutions for the common good?

It is understandable that many guiding institutions are reluctant to engage with religious and spiritual communities in working on social issues because these communities are often viewed as incompetent or divisive. Unfortunately, guiding institutions that do work with these communities often view them simply as “foot soldiers” to accomplish their own goals, rather than view them as true partners with unique contributions to make. How can religious and spiritual communities become informed and effective partners in addressing real world problems? How can other guiding institutions become aware and appreciative of the unique role that religious and spiritual communities can play?





Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions works with religious and spiritual communities and other guiding institutions (government, labor, education, media, science, intergovernmental organizations and organizations of civil society) in their efforts to achieve a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. The Council expresses this mission through:

Periodic Parliaments gather together people of faith, spirit and goodwill to encounter the vast and rich diversity of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, to dialogue for mutual understanding and to address the critical issues facing the world.

The Assembly-held in conjunction with periodic Parliaments-brings together a select group of diverse religious and spiritual leaders, scholars, experts, activists, young people and influential members of other guiding institutions to galvanize commitment to a better world at grassroots and global levels.

The Partner Cities Network seeks to enhance the interreligious movement for peace, justice and sustainability within and between cities around the world. The cornerstone of this emerging network is the annual Goldin Institute for International Partnership and Peace, providing a forum for teams of grassroots peace activists and religious leaders to share methodologies, tools and mutual support necessary for creating effective partnerships internationally.

CPWRGlobal.net is an on-line forum that facilitates communication among persons active in the work of the Council and the worldwide interreligious movement.



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