

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. HIEI

THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF
PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE

JAPAN CONFERENCE OF
RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVES



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91
79
10th
Meeting

Throughout the World, Let Us Pray!

In the summer of 1987, we gathered on Mount Hiei and prayed: "May the great gift of peace be granted on earth."

On that sacred mountain our united prayer spread from person to person, then country to country, crossed over continents, and gradually grew into a large current of hope.

Meanwhile, the world community went through great changes. It had to face a grinding cycles of destruction and renewal during these years.

Ten years later, in the summer of 1997, people of faith met again on the same mountain. There were many new faces, as well as old familiar ones. Again, like ten years previously, religious people of different traditions dedicated their united prayer: "May all living things live in harmony. May God's peace be granted in our time!"

This is the record of the three days in which representatives of Japanese religions put their hearts together to pray for peace along with religious leaders from all over the world.

A silhouette of Mount Hiei is shown against a vibrant sunset sky with orange and yellow hues. The mountain's peak is visible, with a small structure or shrine at the top. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

祈りを世界に

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Opening Ceremony



Representatives from abroad on stage



From left to right, Mr. Akashi; Mr. Kosugi, Minister of Education; Cardinal Arinze



Executive members of the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



Vice President Fukada introduces guests from overseas.

President Sugitani gives the opening address.



Vice President Hirose welcomes the participants.

Advisor Nakayama gives congratulatory address.



Vice President Shirahata makes the welcoming speech.

Vice President Okamoto greets the guests.



Vice President Takeda gives welcoming address.



Mr. Kosugi, Minister of Education, speaks to the audience.

Aug. 2nd 1997

The program begins,
transcending nationality,
ethnicity, culture, and religion.



Opening Program
in the Grand Conference Hall.



TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
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**THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF
PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE**

Messages from
Religious Leaders

From Assisi to Mount Hiei... The spirit transcends time and place.

On October 27, 1986, Pope John Paul II called representatives of the world's religions to Assisi.

They prayed for peace in accord with their own traditions.

The same spirit came to Mt. Hiei the following year.

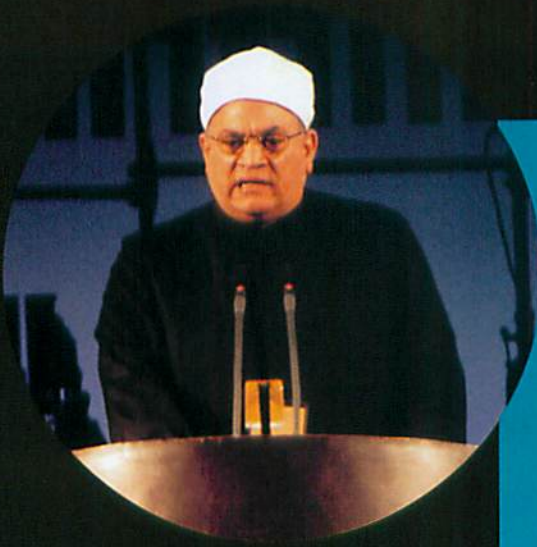
Now, after ten years, that spirit is realized once again.

Messages of the top three world religions united at Mt. Hiei.
(See Page 45)

(Pope John Paul II meets the late Ven. Etai Yamada, Head Priest of Tendai Sect)



Francis Cardinal Arinze reads the Pope's message.



Prof. Ahmad Umar Hashim reads
a message from Sheikh Al-Azhar



Sheikh Al-Azhar Dr. Mohamed Sayed Tantawy

Aug. 2nd
1997



Lt. Gen. Chalom Wismol reads
a message from Prof. S. Dharmasakti



Prof. Sanya Dharmasakti, President of the
World Fellowship of Buddhists.



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Memorial Lectures

"....if people could find within
themselves a little more courage,
a little more hope,
a little more responsibility,
a little more mutual
understanding and love."

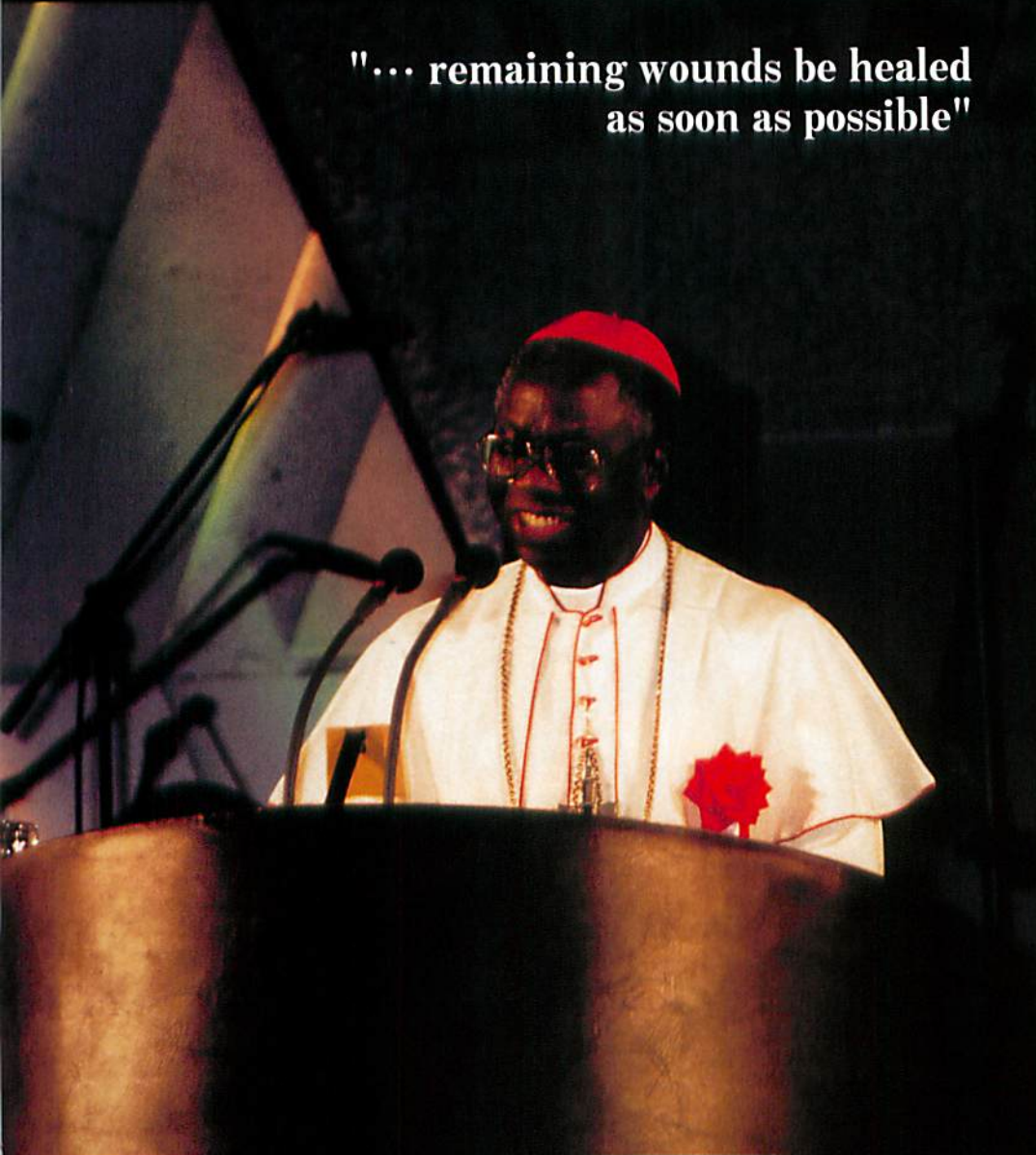


Mr. Yasushi Akashi, UN Under-Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs gives a lecture on
"World Peace and Human Wisdom."

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. HIEI
THE INTERRELIGIOUS GATHERING OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

Aug. 2nd 1997

"... remaining wounds be healed
as soon as possible"



Francis Cardinal Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, gives a lecture on "Religious Cooperation and Reconciliation between Peoples."



TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE RELIGION SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. HIEI

THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF
PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE



Special Musical Performance

Stomu Yamash'ta plays "Prayer for Peace; Resonating for Peace to the World" on Sanukite stone instruments.



Dr. Maeda presents
Sanukite stone as gifts
to the overseas delegates.
(See page 78)



A "Gion-Daiko", dynamic drum performances
from Kyoto's Yasaka Shrine



Welcoming Reception

New meetings and reunions
at the Takaragake Prince
Hotel.



Aug.3rd 1997

Peace Sessions

Mutual understanding
begins from exchange
of opinions.

Twenty-eight panelists speak on the two main themes, "Interfaith Cooperation and World Peace" and "The Role of Religion in the Twenty First Century."





TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
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THE INTERRELIGIOUS GATHERING OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

Ceremony of Interreligious
Prayer for World Peace

Most. Ven. Eshin Watanabe,
Honorary President, gives
greetings representing the host organization.



Aug.4th 1997

On a summer day,
a cool breeze passed through
the top of Mount Hiei.
Words of prayer flowed in
front of the serene Konponchudo.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. Hiei
THE INTERRELIGIOUS GATHERING OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE



Twelve hundred people prayed together in the square in front of Konponchudo.



"Umibue-no-Kai" played the flute, refreshing the atmosphere.

At 3:30 p.m., the "Peace Bell" tolled to begin the ceremony.



The world religious representatives released "A Message from Mt. Hiei" to the world.



Young people, a symbol of the future, participated in the ceremony.

Ven. Ryusho Kobayashi, General Director of Enryakuji Temple, gives the closing address.





Participants exchanged peace greetings



比叡山宗教サミット10周年記念「世界宗教者平和の祈りの集い」特別フォーラム

21世紀へ向けての人類の課題と宗教

Human Issues & Role of Religion in the Twenty First Century

主催・日本宗教代表者会議



Special Forum

August 4th, the forum was recorded by NHK, Japanese public broadcasting station.



TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. ITTEI

THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF
PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE

Hiroshima Tour

May the departed
rest in peace !



Field trip to the A-bomb Museum: Aug. 5



Ven. Gijun Sugitani offers flowers at the altar.
(above)

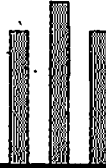
Mrs. P.Tangiola offers incense.
(below): Aug. 6



Offering flowers at the atomic bomb monument



Aug. 5th-6th
1997



**TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELIGIOUS
SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. HIEI**

**THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE**

Foreword

On August 2, 3, and 4, 1997 we solemnly convened the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt.Hiei, "The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace." We had the honor of welcoming representatives from eighteen countries in Kyoto and at Mt. Hiei while the meeting was in session. Thirty-five delegates, thirty-two observers, and four thousand Japanese religious representatives gathered at the site of the meetings, Kyoto International Conference Hall and Enryakuji Temple. The meeting was indeed memorable, being the largest scale interfaith gathering ever held in Japan.

In 1962, interreligious dialogue gained wide recognition when the late Pope Paul VI officially announced that the Catholic Church would promote dialogue with other religions at the Second Vatican Council. In Japan, interreligious dialogue has steadily grown since the inauguration of the Japan Religious Committee for World Federation in 1967 and the Japan Chapter of the World Conference of Religious Representatives in 1970.

In February 1981, when Pope John Paul II visited Japan, he called a meeting with representatives of Japanese religions. In his speech he referred to the teachings of Saicho, having called him the great Japanese religious teacher: "The highest expression of compassion is in action for the benefit of others, without thought of one's own benefit." He said that the desire to help others with compassion is vital to promoting interreligious dialogue. His remarks encouraged the Japanese delegates and strengthened their resolve to cooperate. Inspired by this important meeting, interreligious dialogue in Japan progressed rapidly. Along these lines, the World Religionists Ethics Congress convened in Tokyo and Kyoto, in June of 1981. Japanese people of faith participated in the meeting of the World Day of Prayer for Peace initiated by Pope John Paul II in Assisi, in October of 1986. The lasting impression of united prayer at Assisi led to the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei in August 1987.

A decade has passed since then and mutual understanding between religions both in Japan and throughout the world has grown several-fold. The tenth meeting here in Kyoto commenced with the understanding that wider and deeper religious cooperation was urgently needed. As was the case ten years earlier, the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives organized to unite the forces of all major Japanese religious organizations: it included the five organizations supporting the Japan Federation of Religion (Japan Buddhist Federation, United Association of Shinto Shrines, the Federation of Sectarian Shinto, Japan Federation of Christian Associations, and the Union of New Religious Organization in Japan), plus two multi-religious organizations (the Japan Committee for the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and the Japan Religious Committee for World Federation). We were also able to obtain support from other independent organizations especially for this occasion. Thus, the event became a reality through the combined efforts of the entire Japanese religious community.

At the end of the Cold War, the whole world rejoiced. However, that victory was short-lived. Moments later the world had to confront other grave issues one after another: ethnic conflicts, environmental problems, poverty, refugees, food shortages, swelling populations, and many more. On the other hand, excessive development of science and technology made cloning human an impending reality. It seems that civilization has come too far from the natural development of all living beings. Spiritual values may cease to exist if we ignore these situations without taking concrete measures. In this respect, people of religion were deeply aware of the problems of the times. They, therefore, gathered in Kyoto to unite their spiritual power for world peace.

The religious representatives of the world exchanged views on two major themes, "Interfaith Cooperation and World Peace" and "the Role of Religion in the 21st Century." On the last day of the meeting everyone gathered on Mount Hiei, dedicated the united prayer for peace, and released the Message from Mt. Hiei. The Japanese religious community had the honor of welcoming representatives from major world religious organizations, which included the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, the Muslim World League, and the World Fellowship of Buddhists. Leaders of indigenous religions, delegates from areas involved in conflicts such as Bosnia and Cambodia, and representatives of international interfaith organizations all the way from the different

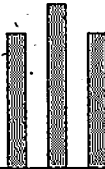
continents joined together. It was truly a rare occasion that such diverse people of religion exchanged their opinions on the same ground. We believe that this meeting will mark a significant step for interreligious dialogue in the 21st Century.

We are humbly aware of the fact that prayer and dialogue will not directly bring about peace or solve the problems confronting the world . Such a meeting, however, surely eliminates barriers of distrust that have existed between religions for a long time, and creates a new unity, which opens a new possibility of mutual understanding. We believe that this step-by-step communication will secure footing for creating one global human family. Striving for this greater unity, people of religion first need to reflect upon their old patterns of thinking, then develop a positive vision for the future, **and finally they need to expand their capacity to respect the divine images of different traditions.** At the point of our new start, we realize that no religion has absolute authority. We **should develop a new interreligious culture of mutual respect.** Our experience at Mt. Hiei, we **believe, is a light to illuminate the path toward the ideal unity.**

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to all the eminent masters and the staff members who made this important event possible. Similarly, I convey my gratitude for the good work of the young volunteers who will, I believe, pursue the same goal in the future. Let us pray to God and Buddha that we can all unite our energy to continue on the path toward peace on earth.

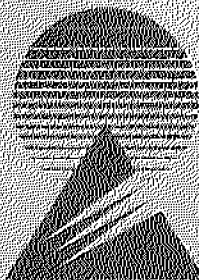
November 1, 1997

The Very Ven.Gijun Sugitani
Secretary General
Japan Conference of Religious Representatives
President of the Tendai Buddhist Denomination



**THE INTERRELIGIOUS GATHERING OF
PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE**

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A Message From Mt. Hiei



At the end of "The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace," held on Mt. Hiei on August 2 - 4, 1997, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the first Mt. Hiei Religious Summit Meeting, those of us who have come together atop this mountain send a heartfelt message to the representatives of all religions, and to all people who, day and night, throughout the world, work for peace.

In October 1986, a Prayer for World Peace Meeting was held in Assisi in response to an appeal from Pope John Paul II. Inheriting the spirit of that meeting, we held a gathering of prayer and dialogue on Mt. Hiei, ten years ago, in 1987. Under the motto "From Assisi to Mt. Hiei," we rang the Peace Bell while immersed in prayer. As we deepened our mutual respect for the religious traditions of the world, we spoke of how each of us is striving, according to the tenets of our respective faiths, to heal the hearts of those in pain. In doing so, we reconfirmed our resolve, common to all religions, to respond with an indomitable spirit to the realities of our suffering world.

Since then, ten years have passed. Dialogue and mutual understanding between world religions has steadily advanced and the bonds between religious people who earnestly long for peace have become ever stronger. At the same time, we are confronted at the present time with critical issues such as environmental problems caused by global warming, poverty, starvation, food and population, discrimination, human rights, violence, and the repression of indigenous peoples. When we face the harsh realities of a world tossed in chaos, and ask ourselves to what extent religion has actually brought about healing, we cannot help but be painfully aware of our own inadequacy.

The problems confronting us today are exceedingly complex, yet as members of the human community we must recognize that foremost among them is the issue of environmental health and the mutual prosperity of all living things. The rapid development of modern science has destroyed our ecosystem and has violated the symbiotic balance found in the natural environment. Aspirations for peace continue to be ignored as the build-up of arms and the development of nuclear weapons are still being promoted. The dignity of life is debased, and

the quality of human existence may well be degraded by cloning and other such ventures, as there seems to be no limit to the challenges undertaken by life sciences. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that the human race faces a crisis of life and death proportions.

Looking squarely at these realities, we wish to emphasize that the underlying cause of these problems is in our greed and insatiable desire for material wealth. In addition, we must emphasize that it is our egoistic conceit that lurks beneath our loss of the sense of the dignity of life and the reverence it deserves. Based on this realization, we must cultivate a religious soil in which the existence of all living things will be cherished, and we must redouble our efforts to foster a religious sensitivity permeated by justice and love, toleration and mercy.

To pray for peace is to work for peace. It is nothing other than to sacrifice oneself and offer oneself with complete devotion to the cause of peace. At this time, we must reflect sincerely upon the insufficiency of our prayers. We must arouse an attitude of self-restraint within the hearts of people, so easily inclined to be slaves to their own desires. We must share the suffering and the pain of others, and, in a spirit of mutual understanding, struggle harder to bring into being a world in which we can live peacefully together.

Gathered here today atop Mt. Hiei on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the first Mt. Hiei Religious Summit Meeting, we pledge to join forces with religious people all over the world. We seek to erect fortresses of peace within each of our hearts that will radiate light amidst the chaos of our world. We take this moment to appeal fervently to the youth of the next generation to cultivate a respect for peace. We pray with all our hearts that the entirety of humankind shall be blessed with the fruits of these longings and enjoy never-ending peace upon this earth.

Mt. Hiei, August 4th, 1997

The participants of the Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace

PROSPECTUS



We would like to announce that on August 2, 3 and 4, 1997, the 10th interreligious meeting, through the combined efforts of all the Japanese religions, will be convened in Kyoto.

In 1987, sincerely aspiring for lasting peace in the world, the leaders of the world's major religions prayed together on Mt. Hiei, in accordance with their traditions. They then took a vow that this united effort be continued.

Ten years have passed since then. We have developed dialogue between religions and fostered mutual understanding during those years. The basis of our unity has always been the longing for lasting peace on earth. However, we must realize that in reality, the world is far from unified. We sometimes feel frustrated that this world is in chaos and every positive step towards peace is blocked. We have ethnic and religious disputes, environmental destruction, booming world population, food shortages in various areas, and the list goes on, all of which demand immediate and concrete measures.

Tracing back our civilization, we can see human desire as the main motivating factor in our development. However, greed corrupts the healthy desire for prosperity when humans are driven to obtain more and more material wealth. Consequently, the idea of "survival of the fittest" has pervaded the world community.

Now at the end of the 20th century, it seems time to reject this mentality. In many areas of the world, excessive materialism has warped people's minds. This widespread trend has also precipitated a decline of ethics and aggravated indifference, even antagonism, to religion. The excesses of entire nations have caused nuclear proliferation and reinforcement of armaments. This has caused the great gap between the North and the South.

Looking at these current problems, it is painfully obvious that we need more concentrated efforts to deal with them. Since the religious community's identity is expressed through prayer, we must consolidate our invocation for peace. Our means of action is prayer. We therefore earnestly pray to God and Buddha so that we can change

our way of thinking and create a world of love and compassion. We pray that the mainstream of our modern society may be changed from materialism to spiritual richness.

We realize that to shift the paradigm that is our society we must first change ourselves. We must change ourselves to be more loving, compassionate, and caring. Humans are inclined towards materialistic lifestyles and are driven by uncontrollable desires. We therefore pray that God and Buddha encourage us to be aware of the love and compassion with which we are innately endowed. If you listen to your heart, you will learn how to control your excessive wanting, and change it into sharing. Self-centeredness must be changed to altruism. When we see these things in other people's actions, we can surely expect a brighter future. With a renewed commitment to ethics, will naturally follow a new strength. Then a real and perpetual peace can be realized on earth in the hearts of each one of us.

If one person changes his or her mind, that person's family would change. If one family changes, a local community would be changed; and then a whole nation and then an entire world. We believe that this is not a mere dream. Let us not be overly pessimistic about our future, since there is hope if you believe in the power of the human will and its capacity to be guided by the supreme existence.

At the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt.Hiei, we, Japanese people of faith, will gather on Mt. Hiei to proclaim our belief, together with the world's religious leaders. In the coming August, we would also like to demonstrate the importance of fraternity among the world's religions, particularly for those nations who are suffering from ethnic and religious disputes.

We will take a solemn oath before the supreme existence to change our attitude from taking to sharing. We will dedicate our sincere prayer, so that God and Buddha may grant us everlasting peace.

Japan Conference of Religious Representatives





GREETINGS

At the Starting Point of Our Future

The Most Ven. Eshin Watanabe

Tendai Zasu, the Supreme Priest of the Tendai Buddhist Denomination

Honorary President, Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



Eminent world religious leaders will gather again on Mount Hiei this summer to attend "The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace". At this meeting, we will discuss the role of religions in dealing with various grave issues that humankind faces, and dedicate our prayers for peace on Mt. Hiei in accordance with our different religious traditions. We hold this gathering to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei. The world community has greatly changed during the past decade. We therefore wish to make this meeting a positive step toward our new collective future, based on deep reflection of what we, religious people religion, have done for the good of the community.

We are humans who are inevitably inclined to be self-centered. In this respect, we painfully acknowledge that men of religion have aggravated, if not intentionally, narrow-minded ethnocentrism. Now we must appeal to those of different religions, that they firmly stand, so that we recognize each other's common ground, rather than stressing our differences. We must be aware that we all have religions; this is our basis. Interreligious dialogue and religious cooperation must start at this point.

Ten years ago, we were applauded for initiating a meeting of the world's religious leaders of different faiths. Today, however, we must raise our goal higher to develop a firmer and deeper trust among the world's religious people. At this invaluable meeting, I truly hope that we can re-affirm our efforts to unite under the common ideal of contributing to the positive development of civilization.

I am very pleased that this meeting was made possible through the significant efforts and cooperation of the united Japanese religious organizations, which include the Japan Federation of Religion and many other Japanese religious representatives.

With Gassho,

A New Prayer and a New Promise

Madame Kiyoko Deguchi

Spiritual Leader of Oomoto

Honorary Advisor

Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



It seems significant that today's Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace is convening on the tenth anniversary of a previous religious summit meeting on Mt. Hiei. That meeting was also on a grand scale with the participation of many distinguished leaders of various world religions.

At that time we prayed for world peace and promised interfaith cooperation, believing that true peace would come about only if we showed respect for each other's religions and cooperated with one another.

The problems of the world today, however, seem only to have proliferated, with destruction of the environment, anomalous weather conditions, and natural disasters. On social and political fronts we have disputes over race and religion, political corruption, a rise in violent crime, and many others. The global extent of these thorny issues make us deeply anxious about our future, and keeps our minds and hearts in turmoil.

I believe that these negative trends in the world are closely related to the condition within our own hearts. They are a divine command for us to reflect upon ourselves, join with other believers in correcting our own negative attitudes, and improve the situation in the world today.

The theme of this meeting is, I am told, "From Taking to Helping." This is the very spirit of love and peace that my grandfather, the late spiritual leader of Oomoto, advocated in his teachings. In this spirit I would like to pray and make fresh vows, together with religious leaders from Japan and abroad, for the realization of world peace.

The Heart of Religion will save the World

The Most Ven. Ryushu Takai

President of the Japan Buddhist Federation

Honorary Advisor,
Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



An ancient Buddhist saying reads: "The truth of Buddhism exists not far from our everyday living. Rather, that very truth resides in the heart of every one of us." You would never find happiness anywhere if your heart is not peaceful, it teaches. Similarly, I believe that it would be difficult to attain real happiness without appreciating the guidance of God and Buddha.

Religion essentially begins from prayers for peace and happiness. As is widely believed, true religious teaching is profound and practical, embracing universal truths that transcend boundaries of race and nationality. Therefore, religion can be the best, if not the only, means to save the modern world — a world that embodies complex and diverse value systems.

Modern civilization has developed, perhaps, the wrong idea that science and technology represent the only means to solve problems. To correct this line of thinking, we, united people of faith, must reiterate the fundamental religious truths to the world. Religion respects traditional human wisdom and affirms a world view of interdependence among every single life on this earth. Now is the time that the world religions should concentrate their efforts and cooperate, to demonstrate, by example, a new life style: a shift from the secular toward the spiritual.

It is significant that the interreligious prayer in Assisi started 11 years ago and the spirit was continued in the following year at the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei, mother mountain of Japanese Buddhism. This year, ten years after this memorable event, many eminent religious leaders of the world gather in Kyoto to dedicate fervent prayers for harmony and peace in the world. I have no doubt that the meeting will commemorate the wisdom of all men and women responding to the demands of today's world.

Now, as the world moves toward mutual understanding and cooperation, we must work hard to support this trend; first, through repentance for past mistakes resulting from our excessive desire; second, by humbly listening to the guidance of God and Buddha.

Let us then make a vow to work together, hand in hand, to strengthen cooperation between religions.



Constructing the Culture of Life

The Most Rev. Fumio Hamao

President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan

Honorary Advisor

Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



The Twentieth Century will come to a close in three more years. It was a century of suffering and wars that challenged us, one after another. Ultimately, World War II and mushrooming ethnic disputes may characterize the era. Refugees multiplied all over the world and human life was squandered. In addition, greed for more prosperous lives resulted in the destruction of the environment.

Nuclear weapons and its industry, nuclear testing and the use of other such weapons of mass destruction all of these would accelerate the destruction of life. All all of them, I believe to embody a "culture of death."

His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the supreme leader of the Catholic Church, suggests that the crucial subject for all humankind today is to establish a "culture of life" in contrast to the "culture of death." This, in particular, is the mission that people of religion should devote themselves to.

In this respect, we must question the almost sensational development of medicine. Medical technology does not always contribute to the support of human life, if we are to honor the dignity of human life. Organ transplants save lives, which can be an act of love; while there are some cases of killing innocent children for the re-sale value of their organs. Similarly, some countries legalize abortion for the purposes of eugenic protection, so that a life with possible problems or "complications" is disregarded.

For these reasons, the key to building a peaceful world in the next century, I believe, is to establish a new culture of life, affirming the coexistence of every life, whether it be human or not, on this Earth.

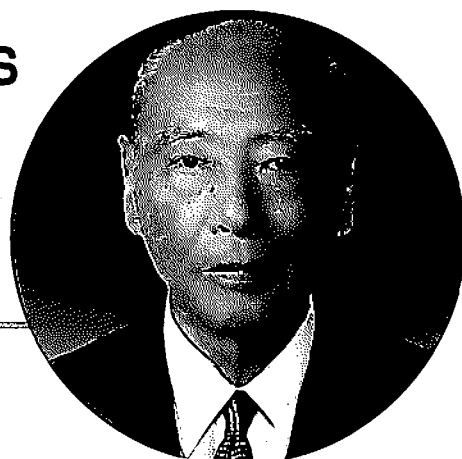
For Further Interreligious Cooperation

The Rev. Morisada Hosokawa

Senior President of the Association of Shinto Shrines

Honorary Advisor

Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



Religion is diverse. Each religion has different characteristics, and we can hardly categorize them in a single form. Under these circumstances, it is extraordinary and not without great significance that the world religions unite under a single goal: the pursuit of world peace. Succeeding in the spirit of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei of ten years ago, we meet again to reaffirm the role of religion, and to dedicate our prayers for peace in accordance with our different traditions.

It is a historic irony that the fall of the Cold War structure caused many ethnic disputes. However, we must overcome this tragic fact and continue working hard, by accepting differences of viewpoint, in order to realize a lasting peace in the world. In this respect, I believe that this "Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace" will play a great role in the realization of peace in the future.

I believe that religion innately has the power to realize world peace. I therefore pray that this meeting can be a big step toward the development of religious cooperation.

Toward the Century of Sharing

The Rev. Nikkyo Niwano

Honorary Chairman of the Federation
of New Religious Organizations of Japan

Honorary Advisor
Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



This year already marks the tenth anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei. I am of the impression that these ten years have gone by very quickly. This decade seems to have passed in the blinking of an eye since problems have occurred one after the other.

In Japan, we have experienced the implosion of the "bubble" economy and its aftermath. Meanwhile, the world has witnessed devastation in the Balkans. Fighting has sprung up in the different regions of the world, and Africa has suffered from great famine.

In the developing countries, overpopulation has continued. As a result, food shortages have worsened in many areas and the need for assistance has grown even greater. And it goes beyond saying that since the countries that had been receiving aid from the former Soviet Union no longer do, the number of cases calling for assistance has also increased.

It is now said that if countries are divided into those giving and those receiving assistance, then in the year 2000 the population of the giving countries will be about 800 million while the population in the receiving countries is projected to reach 5.3 billion. Since this is a ratio of seven receivers of assistance to each giver, in theory each of us living in a developed country must realize his or her responsibility to care for seven people in a developing country.

As this selfish twentieth century comes to a close, the role of we religious people who hope and pray for the dawn of a twenty-first century of sharing and coexistence is one that I believe the Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace will do much to help define.

Praying Together and Working Together

Cardinal Seiichi Shirayanagi

President of the Japan Committee for
the World Conference on Religion and Peace

President
Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



On the eve of the year 2000, humankind is living on the edge of anxiety and hope. Anxiety comes from the many possible outcomes of the 20th century; it could be, for example, hatred and disputes, radically developed science, technology, or materialism. We feel depressed at the prospect that the same conditions may continue in the next century without any particular improvement.

On the other hand, hope comes from our expectations of the new century; we hope the new era will be an age of the flowering of humanity. We wish the coming age to be directed toward preserving the preciousness of the lives of all men and women.

At this historical turning point, I believe that it is quite significant to hold the interfaith gathering on Mt. Hiei, to pray together for peace, and to exchange views on what the real progress of humankind should be. In this way, we can strengthen our spiritual unity. At the same time, I wish that we, the people of faith, could share the same thoughts with the rest of the world; the same joy and hope, or sadness and suffering. Particularly, we hope that we can stand by the people who are poor and the people who suffer. It is religionists sensitive response to such matters that makes them truly humane.

People of religion know that we need the grace and support of God and Buddha if we are to pursue real peace and happiness.

Let us therefore pray together and work together.

Opening the Future to Coexistence among Every Life on Earth

The Ven. Eiki Ikeda

President of the Japan Religious Committee for the World Federation

President

Japan Conference of Religious Representatives



The Twentieth Century will end in three more years, after which follows the beginning of the Third Millennium. As if to open the door of this great transitional period, the construction of the international space station will start next year to be completed in the year 2002. It is intended that this project will be a collaborative effort of scientists from twenty countries, including the United States and Russia. This indeed hints at the beginning of the coming space age.

The coming of this new age reminds me of an event that occurred back in 1963. It was one of the last official statements made by the late Pope John XXIII, entitled Peace on the Earth, which was presented at the Second Vatican Council. The Pope noted, "This Universe runs by an extraordinary ordered system, while almost tragically in contrast, chaos characterizes the relations of humans and ethnic groups. It is as though only power can control their collective relations."

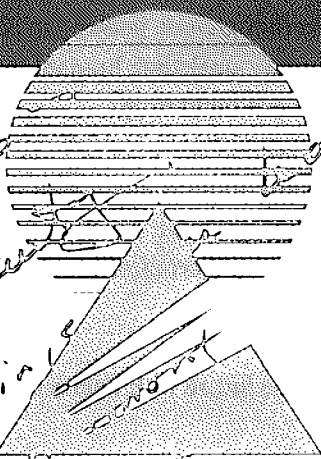
I believe that peace is not the supreme goal that humankind should reach; rather, it must be recognized as a touchstone, which we can build from.

In this respect, it is my greatest pleasure to meet again with the friends from the world's religions at the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei. The meeting will be long remembered in history as the symbolic gathering of prayers for peace to draw this century to a close.

I sincerely pray that the world enters the future with hearts filled with peace.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE RELIGIOUS
SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. Hiei

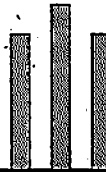
THE
INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING
OF PRAYER FOR
WORLD PEACE



August 4

1997

JAPAN CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS
REPRESENTATIVES



TIME SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

August 2, 1997

SATURDAY

Opening Ceremony, Memorial Lecture and Special Musical Performance

Main Hall, Kyoto International Conference Hall

11:00	Open the Reception Counter
11:00~13:30	Registration for Invited Guests
13:30~13:45	Opening Music
13:45~14:35	Opening Ceremony
13:45	· Opening Remarks The Ven. Gijun Sugitani
13:50	· Introduction of Overseas Delegates The Ven. Mitsuhiro Fukada
14:05	· Welcome Address The Rev. Yasumi Hirose The Rev. Kenji Okamoto The Ven. Kenyu Shirahata
14:15	· Messages from Abroad His Holiness Pope John Paul II — Francis Cardinal Arinze Sheik Al-Azhar Dr. Mohamed Sayed Tantawy — Prof. Ahmad Umar Hashim Prof. Sanya Dharmasakti, President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists — Lt. Gen. Chalom Wismol
14:25	· Congratulatory Address Mr. Takashi Kosugi, Minister of Education The Rev. Zen'ei Nakayama
14:35~14:45	Break
14:45~16:45	Memorial Lecture
14:45	· Lecture① "World Peace and Human Wisdom" Mr. Yasushi Akashi, UN Under-Secretary-General
15:45~15:55	Break
15:55	· Lecture② "Religious Co-operation and Reconciliation between Peoples" His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze
16:45~16:55	Break
16:55~17:40	Special Musical Performance "Prayer for Peace; Resonating for Peace to the World" Stomu Yamash'ta, Percussionist
17:40~17:45	· Closing Remarks The Rt. Rev. John M. Takeda

Welcoming Reception

Prince Hall, Kyoto Takaragaike Prince Hotel

18:30~20:30	Welcoming Reception
18:30	· Opening Remarks The M. Rev. Raymond K. Tanaka
	· Welcoming Remarks The Very Ven. Ryusyu Takai The Rev. Nichiko Niwano
	· Congratulatory Address and Message Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General
	· Attraction Gion-Daiko
	· Presentation of Sanukite stone
	· Toast The Rev. Tomoe Kato
20:20	· Closing Remarks The Rev. Muneharu Kurozumi

August 3, 1997

SUNDAY

Session ① "Interfaith Cooperation and World Peace"

Room A, Kyoto International Conference Hall

9:30	Open the Reception Counter
10:30~16:45	Session ①
10:30~10:35	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: Ven. Kenyu Shirahata
10:35~11:15	Theme 1) The Religious Peace Movement and Ethnic Disputes ① Prof. Agostino Giovagnoli (Community of St. Egidio), Italy ② The Venerable Tep Vong (Buddhist), Cambodia ③ His Eminence Vinko Cardinal Puljić (Catholic), Bosnia-Herzegovina
11:15~11:20	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: Rev. Yasumi Hirose
11:20~12:15	Theme 2) East-West Religious Dialogue and Mutual Understanding ① Rev. Fr. Thomas Michel (Catholic), Italy ② Dr. Abdullah Bin Saleh Al-Obaid (Muslim), Saudi Arabia ③ His Eminence Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim (Orthodox), Syria ④ Chief Rabbi Prof. David Rosen (Jewish), Israel
12:15~14:00	Lunch Break
14:00~14:05	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: Ven. Koremichi Miyanishi
14:05~15:00	Theme 3) Contributions to Humanity and the Solidarity of Religions ① Rev. Fr. Paul Shindo Oe (Anglican), Japan ② Maj. Gen. Sujan Singh Uban (Sikh), India ③ The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing (Anglican), USA. ④ The Venerable Song Sol-Ju (Buddhist), Korea
15:00~15:40	Break
15:40~15:45	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: Rev. Yoshinobu Minami
15:45~16:45	Theme 4) The Development and Future Prospects of Religious Dialogue ① The Very Rev. James Parks Morton (TOU), USA. ② Rev. Robert Traer (IARF), UK ③ Rev. Munemichi Kurozumi (The Association of Sectarian Shinto), Japan ④ Dr. William F. Vendley (WCRP), USA.
16:45~17:00	Closing Remarks Chairperson: Ven. Kenyu Shirahata

August 3, 1997

SUNDAY

Session ② "The Role of Religion in the Twenty First Century" Room B-1, Kyoto International Conference Hall

9:30	Open the Reception Counter
10:30~16:45	Session ②
10:30~10:35	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: The Ven. Eiki Ikeda
10:35~11:15	Theme 1) Approaching the Young Generation and Non-religious People ① Miss Natalia Dallapiccola (Focolare Movement, Catholic), Italy ② Dr. Gene Reeves (Protestant), USA.
11:15~11:20	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: The Rev. Mitsuhiro Fukada
11:20~12:15	Theme 2) The Responsibility of People of Faith for Human Rights ① The Rev. Fr. Gonzalo Ituarte Verduzco, O.P. (Catholic), Mexico ② The Ven. Shin'in Nishida (Buddhist), Japan ③ Mrs. Pauline E. Tangiora, J.P. (indigenous religion), New Zealand ④ The Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah (Protestant), Switzerland
12:15~14:00	Lunch Break
14:00~14:05	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: The Rt. Rev. John M. Takeda
14:05~15:00	Theme 3) Establishing the Basic Idea of the Interdependent Harmony of Life ① Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne (Buddhist), Sri Lanka ② The Rev. Toshihiko Goto (Shinto), Japan ③ Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma (Hindu), India ④ Mr. Tulley Spotted Eagle Boy (indigenous religion), Canada
15:00~15:40	Break
15:40~15:45	Remarks by Chairperson Chairperson: The Rev. Munehiro Okuda
15:45~16:45	Theme 4) Religiously Based Contributions to Society ① His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro (Muslim), Syria ② The Most Rev. Fr. Agostino Gardin, OFM Conv. (Catholic), Italy ③ The Rev. Takahito Miki (The Union of New Religious Organizations in Japan), Japan
16:45~17:00	Closing Remarks Chairperson: The Ven. Eiki Ikeda

August 4, 1997

MONDAY

The Special Forum

Room A, Kyoto International Conference Hall

10:00~11:30	The Special Forum Human issues and the Role of Religion in the 21st Century — Focused on racial disputes, human rights and bioethics	Dr. Abdullah bin Saleh Al-Obaid (Muslim) The Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah (Protestant) His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze (Catholic) Chief Rabbi Professor David Rosen (Jewish) Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma (Hindu) The Ven. Gijun Sugitani (Buddhist)
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The Ceremony of Interreligious Prayer for World Peace

Enryakuji Temple, Mt. Hiei

13:30~15:00	Registration
15:00~17:00	The Ceremony of Interreligious Prayer for World Peace
15:00~15:20	• Entrance of Delegates
15:20	• Opening Remarks The Rev. Tsunekiyo Tanaka
15:30	• Bell for World Peace; Silent Prayer for Peace
15:35	• Greetings by the Sponsor M. Ven. Eshin Watanabe
15:45	• Prayer of World Religions
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> Buddhism Federation of Sectarian Shinto Association of Shinto Shrines Indigenous Religions Judaism Zoroastrianism </div> <div> Christianity Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan Hinduism Islam Sikhism Baha'i </div> </div>
	Interreligious Organizations, WCRP Japan, Japan Religious Committee for the World Federation
16:40	• Release of "A Message from Mt.Hiei" Cardinal Seichi Shirayanagi
16:50	• Peace Greetings
16:55	• Closing Remarks The Ven. Ryusyo Kobayashi

August 5-6, 1997

Hiroshima Tour for Overseas Delegates

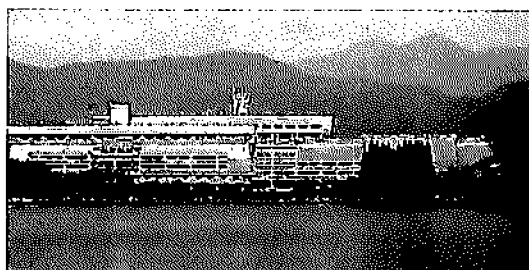
Aug-5 (Tue.)	
14:00	Visit Repose Tower for the Deceased Victims' Spirits
15:00	Visit Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and see documentary film on atomic bombing
Aug-6 (Wed.)	
6:00	Memorial Service (hosted by the Hiroshima religious Federation)
8:00	Peace Ceremony (hosted by Hiroshima City)
10:00	Welcoming Meeting for Overseas Delegates of The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace
12:00	Welcoming Reception

The Meeting Places



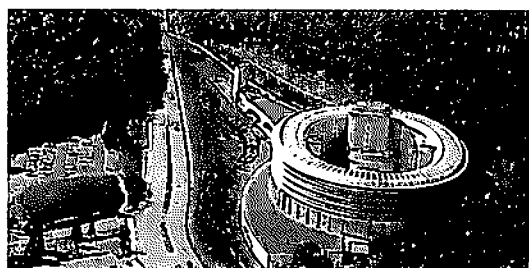
**Mt. Hiei
Konpon Chudo**

The summit of Mt. Hiei is 848 meters above sea level and dotted with the Buddhist monasteries of Enryakuji Temple. It has been known as the birthplace of Japanese Mahayana Buddhism since it was founded by St. Saicho, Dengyodaishi in 788. In 1995, the mountain was enlisted in the UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage. The main hall of the temple is called "Konpon Chudo" where the "Perpetual Dharma Light" has been glowing ceaselessly for more than 1200 years.



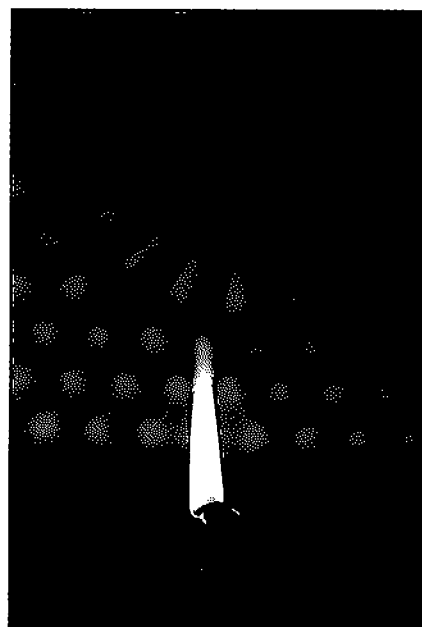
**Kyoto International
Conference Hall**

The national conference hall opened in 1966, situated by the side of Takaragaike Pond in the northern part of Kyoto city. A number of major conferences on international scale are held annually.



**Kyoto Takaragaike
Prince Hotel**

This hotel, located next to the Kyoto International Conference Hall, was designed by the architect Togo Murano. Its elaborate circular features were designed to blend in with the surrounding scenery.



Perpetual Dharma Light



MESSAGES

MESSAGE

His Holiness Pope John Paul II

The Holy Father was pleased to learn that you will be present at the Mount Hiei Religious Summit Meeting at Kyoto in August and He asks you kindly to convey to the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives and the participants His Good Wishes and the assurance of his encouragement of this worthy initiative which has as its goal the strengthening of the commitment to peace and to the cause of man. He is confident that the Tenth Anniversary of the 1987 Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace which was held in the same spirit as the Assisi Meeting of the year before will be an appropriate occasion for a fruitful reflection and exchange on how the world's religions can work to eliminate intolerance and discrimination based on religious adherence or belief. In order to ensure that the next century will be a time of reconciliation and cooperation between the followers of all religious traditions, His Holiness invokes abundant blessings upon the work of the meeting.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano
Secretary of State

His Eminence the Grand Imam the Sheikh of Al-Azhar Dr. Muhammad Sayed Tantawy

In The Name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

Peace be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings.

Before I start my speech, I would like to thank the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives for organizing such a great and historical conference. I would like to express also my regards to all of you, to the representatives of all religions, and to the members and delegations of the 10th Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei in Kyoto, Japan. I wish all success to the conference for the sake of all human beings.

Indeed, your conference has great importance because of its timing, its aims and its objectives. To realize the peace of the world, the duty and actions of the new inter-national system as well as the followers of all religions must be more effective and efficacious, because relaxation and passing of time make the problems and crisis suffered by the helpless nations, cause daily destruction, mass killing of innocent people, raping of women and killing of children and aged people. These horrible crimes suffered by those helpless nations are a great shame for the whole world. These horrible crimes are also a black era in the history of mankind especially for the people living in the 20th century, those who claim themselves civilized and educated people leading a life of science and technology.

Islam demands all Muslims to believe in all prophets that preceded Prophet Muhammad, and to believe in all holy books. In The Holy Quran Allah said in Sratul Baqara-verse 285,

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and the believers. Each one believes in Allah, and His angels, and His Books, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any one of his messengers."

All these evidences, and many others, prove clearly that Islam calls strongly for peace, and rejects violence and terrorism. These evidences also prove that Islam calls for living in peace with the followers of other religions. Moreover, Islam does not accept fanaticism, radicalism and race consciousness.

I am, here on behalf of Al-Azhar, the largest academic authority for Islam in the world, and from Egypt appeal to all countries, all governments, all international organization and all followers of other religions to stand hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder to work together to save mankind, and to stop warfare. I also appeal to them to help in spreading a comprehensive and just peace throughout the entire globe.

Al-Azhar, as an international organization, has a message for all the people of the world. This message is the message of Islam, so Al-Azhar always welcomes dialogue with all followers of other religions, and will make all efforts to strengthen and promote the values of human brotherhood, trust, justice, peace and respect of human rights regardless of men's colors, race or religion.

"Our Lord, bestow upon us a mercy from You, and dispose us to rectitude in our affairs."

Peace be upon you.

MESSAGE

Professor Sanya Dharmasakti President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists

On the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei, Japan, on August 2-4 B.E. 2540 (1997), we from the Headquarters of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, Bangkok, Thailand, have the pleasure of extending our best wishes to the organisers as well as to all participants.

The Lord Buddha suggested that the four virtues which should be firmly settled in mind are wisdom, honesty, generosity, and peace.*

May we hope that wisdom, honesty, generosity, and peace are among the different foods for thought in this admirable meeting.

*Adhitthanadhamma: Dhatuvibhanga-sutta

MESSAGE

His Eminence Isarael Meir Lau
Chief Rabbi of Israel

In Honor of the Participants of the
Summit Meeting for World Peace:

To my disdain I am not able to participate in the Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace, convening in Kyoto on August 24 1997. Although I physically will not be present at the Gathering my heart is with you nonetheless.

PEACE in Judiasm is a central theme: One of the names of the Almighty is Shalom (peace). In the word Jerusalem-Yerusalayim, the name of the spiritual center of the Jewish nation we find Shalom (peace). In the Jewish Language the word Shalom (peace) is used as the salutation of welcome and departure.

I offer a prayer, Thee Who Instills Peace Above, Shall Instill Peace Among All the Nations, (Isaiah 2:4) and They shall Beat Their Swords into Plowshares, and Their Spears into Pruning Hooks.

With Blessings from Jerusalem,

MESSAGE

Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, Prime Minister of Japan

I would like to express my sincere congratulations on the tenth anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei: "The Gathering of Interreligious Prayer for World Peace."

I am told that in 1987 the "World Religious Summit Meeting" was held and that the attendees prayed for world peace, as well as exchanged opinions about ending the threat of nuclear weapons and overcoming the crises of the Cold War.

Over the past ten years, momentous events have occurred globally which indicate a bright future for humankind. The Berlin wall crumbled. The Cold War is no more. In light of these events, smaller localized conflicts remain widespread, and tragic events continue to manifest themselves. We must face not only these issues, but also overcome problems with the environment, population, and feeding the world's hungry.

It is indeed significant that the leaders of the world's religions assemble again in order to voice concern over these issues, and to hold the "Gathering of Interreligious Prayer for World Peace" where you will pray for perpetual peace, and dispatch a message from Mt. Hiei to the world demanding peace.

I would like to conclude my message by expressing both my respect for your contribution and a wish for the continued success of this gathering.

MESSAGE

Congratulatory Speech Mr. Takashi Kosugi, Minister of Education

I would like to deliver my congratulations to you at this solemn and important interreligious meeting, held in Kyoto and at Mt. Hiei.

It has been 10 years since the religious meeting on Mt.Hiei on August 4, 1987, to which numerous overseas religious representatives were invited. I understand that you made a vow to continue praying and working for peace.

Despite our earnest wishes for peace and our whole-hearted efforts to achieve it, we confront innumerable hardships everyday. It is only natural, therefore, that your prayers for peace have been echoed in every part of the world. That is the reason why your prayer for peace is necessary. I feel that it is an opportune time for you to gather here and pray, and to work together to respond to the world's fervent cries for peace. I hope, with great expectation, that interreligious dialogue and prayer will become a force to mobilize people all over the world.

The site of this meeting, in this respect, is most suited for this occasion. As is well known, Kyoto has been a center of Japanese culture and tradition for twelve hundred years. This natural environment, the temple compound of Mount Hiei, and the many temples and shrines in Kyoto were listed in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage. It is truly exciting that in this city, the international religious leaders meet and exchange opinions for the spiritual well being of the people of the world, foreseeing our future, offering interreligious prayer, and releasing the peace message to the world. Finally, I wish every success to the participating religious leaders, as well as to the participants from all over Japan.

MESSAGE

Mr. Kofi Annan Secretary-General of the United Nations

To: the Gathering of Interreligious Prayer for World Peace, hosted by the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives

1. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting held at Mt. Hiei, I wish to send my best wishes for a successful exchange of views in your conference. I have closely followed your efforts since 1987 to work together in an ecumenical spirit to promote a shared objective of peace. The experience and commitment of many of you, as distinguished leaders from different faiths, are invaluable in strengthening our capacity to meet this elusive and yet vital objective.

2. As you are too well aware, much has changed in the last decade, and the number of actors and forums for discussion on peace-making and peace-building have multiplied. It is therefore vital to seize every opportunity, such as this Summit, to define, evaluate and confirm our common aims and hopes for a better world community. Your efforts are in perfect harmony with the objectives of the United Nations, and I welcome these important deliberations which will provide renewed energy to the debate.

3. Since 1987, a number of important steps have been made by those organizations and individuals who are committed to ideals of humanity and human rights from their diverse religious perspectives. The world community has assisted many countries which are now rebuilding their communities, such as Namibia, Mozambique, Haiti, and Bosnia, to name a few. However, other, more troublesome cases, such as Afghanistan, the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and Cambodia, show that we must continue to build a culture of peace through trust, dialogue, and the provision of humanitarian and economic assistance. Your discussion will contribute significantly to this sustained effort.

4. I wish you well in your deliberations and join you in your unwavering commitment to help maintain world peace and improve the lives of the world's impoverished and vulnerable groups.



MEMORIAL LECTURES

World Peace and Human Wisdom

Mr. Yasushi Akashi

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General
for Humanitarian Affairs.**



I would like to begin by thanking the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives for inviting me to speak to you today. I am particularly pleased to be addressing such a diverse audience, and to talk about a subject as important as World Peace and Human Wisdom. Although I often speak at conferences, usually the subject is related to humanitarian crises, and thus my remarks tend to focus on some of the most complex problems faced by the international community at the present time. Your gathering, however, is of a much different nature. The focus of your conference, the discussions and prayer you will engage in, has the potential to be tremendously uplifting and invigorating, not only for you participants, but also for those as fortunate as myself to be associated with your gathering. In a world where we are constantly reminded of mankind's ability to inflict terrible cruelty on their fellow beings, it is vital that the voices of reason and peace are heard above the din of violence and confusion.

I am very pleased to be here with you today, to contribute my voice to yours so that we may collectively speak out in the name of human solidarity.

It is appropriate for gatherings such as this to address an issue so fundamentally important to mankind as world peace. Leaders from all the world's major religions, across centuries, have concerned themselves with issues of war and peace, for there is nothing that poses such a threat to a society as war. I would also argue that not only is it appropriate, but it is crucial for this gathering and others like it to address the issue.

The subject of my address, "World Peace and Human Wisdom", has always been a subject of great importance for mankind. It is now, however, more relevant than it has ever been before. It is a paradox that since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, and the ensuing end of the Cold War, more death and destruction has been brought to our planet and its peoples than had been the case during the four and one-half decades of the post World War II period. Of even greater seriousness, mankind is now faced with an increased threat of arms proliferation, if not a deliberate nuclear war, due to the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons in a larger number of hands. Biological and chemical weapons are joined by long-range missiles and other weapons of technological sophistication, and cast an ever-lengthening shadow over our future. We are also confronted with the spread of millions of small weapons, which are often held by illiterate teen-age soldiers as if they were toys.

During the Cold War, the international system was rigidly dominated by the two superpowers. In the bi-polar world created by their tense stand-off, decisions on issues of international import were made

almost exclusively by the two major governments. These two governments, consumed with their intense rivalry with the other, made decisions at a distance from their own people, and were even further removed from the rest of the world's citizens.

The post Cold War world in which we now live is, however, very different. Not only has the rigidity of the bi-polar world been lifted, but the walls at national borders that previously inhibited or discouraged international contact have been lowered. While governments still remain the predominant players in international relations, they no longer possess the absolute monopoly they once did. Decisions that affect communities, societies, nations and international relations are being taken by governments, but in many cases they are now also being influenced by what takes place at the United Nations, in company boardrooms, by regional and non-governmental organizations, and by community and religious groups, as well as what is said and shown by mass media.

Let me pause here and give one example, though there are thousands that I could cite. In Nigeria, Ken Saro-Wiwa, a leader of the Ogoni people, demonstrated with others against the Shell oil company, claiming that their lands were suffering environmental degradation from oil drilling activities. Related to this conflict, Mr. Saro-Wiwa and eight others were charged with murder, convicted, and subsequently hanged. The perceived lack of a fair trial caused an outcry not only amongst many civil groups in Nigeria, but also outside the country. The crisis plunged Nigeria into a head-on conflict with the Commonwealth, in which Nigeria remains mired, at great cost to its international reputation. One small, unknown local voice has thus made itself heard at the uppermost echelons of government power in countries around the world.

It is clear to me that the opportunity for religious and community leaders to influence the decisions that affect their communities has never been greater. With enhanced prospects for effective involvement in decision-making processes, it is both opportune and desirable for religious and community leaders to use their moral standing and the wisdom of their ideas to advance the causes important to their communities, especially the cause of peace. It must, of course, be left up to these leaders how they wish to become involved, what form their involvement takes. It is only they who can decide what type of activity or involvement is appropriate to their community. But the important objectives to pursue are involvement in and achieving influence on the decisions affecting your communities, societies and nations.

My main message to you, as someone who has been involved in international politics and diplomacy for 40 years, is that religious leaders must make their voices heard when an issue as important as world peace is being debated. We cannot afford to blindly defer to statesmen on a subject of such great importance to all of mankind. For one, statesmen have already lost their monopoly on influence; there is a void to be filled, and religious leaders are well-suited to filling, at least in part, that void. Secondly, politicians have brought, through their actions and inactions, unimaginable suffering on mankind by their willingness to resort to war or by their acquiescence to extreme nationalism or violent tribalism. Political leaders thus cannot be left alone to develop, advocate for and ensure implementation of a lasting international peace. They need your help, and the help of other like-minded and similarly committed individuals, leaders and groups.

I realize that individual morality and morality between states should not be equated. I am also aware

that exhortations to action in the face of great adversity can at times sound less than convincing. It would be natural to ask yourself "How can I make a difference on such a big issue as world peace?" Well, any effort must begin, of course, with the individual. Governments, nations, as well as local communities, is all made up of individuals. If I can paraphrase a great Cambodian monk: "A peaceful heart makes for a peaceful person; a peaceful person makes for a peaceful family; a peaceful family makes for a peaceful community; a peaceful community makes for a peaceful country; a peaceful country makes for a peaceful world." You may remember a very similar Chinese proverb. Everything has to begin with humanity's awareness of their common destiny. That, in turn, must be based upon a humble recognition of their basic frailty and our imperfect and transitory existence surrounded by the great mysteries of life and the universe.

Together with the rewards of increased opportunity for community involvement, the end of the Cold War brought with it great risks as well. The rigid nature of the bi-polar world imposed a kind of discipline on countries, and inhibited their descent into uncontrollable violence. The end of the Cold War, and the shattering of the bifurcated international system, have created a large political and emotional void, which often was filled by selfish and short-sighted leaders. Such leaders have propelled their communities and countries down a path of ruin as they pursue through violent means a maximization of their power. As these leaders amass great power and wealth, the civilians, communities, societies and nations under their charge are rendered destitute, and their hopes are dashed under the boots of the young uneducated soldiers.

Thus we see wars, most often civil wars, fought not for reasons of ideology, or out of a commitment to improve the lives of citizens, but for the purpose of obtaining increased power for a particular leader and for the group that has coalesced around him. Such wars have brought untold, and unimaginable, suffering to the people in whose names the wars are fought. These people, civilians generally, have little or no interest in participating in a war fought in their name, much less in suffering its horrible effects. Yet the rhetoric of the leaders invokes the interests and emotions of these very people to justify the war and the violence, as the leaders pursue their next land grab or an expansion in the number of men and boys under arms.



The statistics on war casualties bear this assertion out. At the beginning of the century, in World War I, about 90 percent of war casualties were soldiers and only 10 percent civilians. In the conflicts of the post-Cold War, the numbers are reversed: approximately 90 percent of war related casualties are civilians. This one simple yet stark statistics demonstrates not only the horrible toll that a modern war brings to a society, but also reveals the deceit behind assertion from those who exploit people's genuine sense of fear and insecurity, often in order to enrich themselves.

While the loss of life is the most tragic aspect of war, the destruction caused when societies are thrown against each other in conflict is pervasive in its impact. It can endure generations. The hatred and fear caused by war, often purposely inflamed by those seeking profit from war, change peoples' attitudes, behaviours, and willingness to live and work together when the war is over. Construction of a civil society and cultural harmony can be destroyed in a few short months or years of war. Reconstructing the social and emotional ties and the trust that previously allowed different communities to live harmoniously together is likely to take at least decades. And it is impossible to recreate religious and cultural artifacts and buildings, which form such an important part of a community's heritage, when they are destroyed in a few short minutes of war.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, before war broke out in 1992, rural villages had mixed-ethnic populations. In towns and cities, Serbs, Muslims and Croats lived side-by-side in apartment buildings, went to the same schools, worked in the same factories and offices. Often times people, especially children and teenagers, did not know and did not care if their neighbours or schoolmates were from the same religious or ethnic group or a different one. Inter-marriage was common, reaching more than 30 percent in the capital, Sarajevo. The country was scattered with Islamic mosques, and Catholic and Orthodox churches; Sarajevo had a synagogue. People were free to worship their religion and their God as they saw fit — and no one objected.

Those who argue that Muslims, Serbs and Croats have been fighting for 600 years in the Balkans and therefore cannot live together should look closely at Bosnia before the war. They should talk to Bosnians about their country, their society, and ask them whether they believe that it was impossible, before April 1992, for the three groups to live peacefully together. Many would say that peaceful life was entirely possible before 1992. They will add, however, that, because of the fighting and the horrible cruelties inflicted by and on each other, a hatred has been born that will make cohabitation much more difficult; they will say that it will take years, if not generations, to rebuild the trust that was lost in the three and one-half years of fierce fighting. Trust is a fragile flower, easy to destroy but hard to grow.

The hatred and the ethnic and religious intolerance was a deliberate objective of those who pursued the war in Bosnia for their wrong beliefs or for their own personal gain. This is especially true of the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. Of the several hundred mosques in Serb-controlled Bosnia at the beginning of the war, not one was left standing by the end. Every single one was destroyed as part of a policy or as a result of emotional frenzy, including some mosques of great historical and cultural value that dated back centuries. Most of the Catholic churches used for worship by Bosnian Croats were also destroyed. Many mosques and Orthodox churches were likewise destroyed in Croat-controlled territory. And of course members of the religious/ethnic groups were killed, raped or persecuted by the thousands, and in hundreds of thousands of cases forced to flee their homes. Such experiences will naturally make one bitter, distrustful, and reluctant to place oneself and one's family again at risk.

The far-reaching effects of war go beyond the lives lost and the material damage inflicted by bombs and bullets. War attacks the very heart of a society, and inflicts damage that is very difficult to repair. As religious leaders, who have a particular interest in the spiritual health of the societies in which you live, war must be of special concern to you for these reasons.

Few people will argue about the negative impact of war on society. We should therefore direct our attention to the causes of war, and ask ourselves, "Can war be prevented?"

Certainly one of the greatest sources of conflict throughout the world, be it violent or non-violent conflict, within a community or between nations, is intolerance and, in some cases, religious intolerance. Julien Benda wrote with irony in *La Trahison des clercs* (The Betrayal of Intellectuals).

"Our century will truly have been the century of the intellectual organization of hatred. That will be one of its great claims to fame in the moral history of humanity."

Writing in 1927, Benda was more prophetic than he could have imagined. The intellectual organization of hatred, or intolerance, has had a devastating impact on mankind in the 20th century, stoking the flames of war, and tearing societies asunder. At a UNESCO sponsored conference entitled "For Solidarity Against Intolerance, for a Dialogue Between Cultures," held in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1995, intolerance was compared to an epidemic "which spreads like cancer over the whole world."

Intolerance of course has many sources. It can be the result of social prejudice or of fear. Increasingly it is the result of a new fundamentalism, which Ralf Dahrendorf notes, is "an extreme variant of the politics of cultural despair." In all these cases, however, intolerance is taught by some and learned by others. Children are not born intolerant. On the contrary, children are the most open and tolerant of beings. It is only after misguided social, cultural, and at times religious teachings that they become intolerant, dogmatic and fearful.

Using the child as an analogy, I would like to quote from Marcelino Oreja, a member of the European Commission from Spain:

"Intolerance is the child of ignorance, that same ignorance which is usually used and directed by those who aim to reach and retain power by anti-democratic methods, who want to gain the support of some people by instilling in them the fear of other people, who differ from them by race, religion, language or culture."

These words sadly but accurately describe the roots of many of this century's conflicts, and the selfish motivations of those responsible for initiating them. But the words also provide guidance to us as we search for ways to reduce intolerance and thereby limit conflict. We can not completely prevent the emergence of individuals who are willing to exploit the ignorance, or the circumstances that give rise to the fears of the uneducated. Nevertheless, we can make a difference by providing society's members with education they need to accept and not be afraid of those who are different from us. By educating people, by teaching them tolerance, we protect them from exploitation, and thereby better protect our societies from being dragged into an unwanted war. As Hector Gros Espiell, a Uruguayan intellectual, has observed, "Tolerance is the true foundation of the culture of peace." Religious leaders and religious teachings can play an indispensable role in providing the education that will develop tolerance amongst peoples and lead to the foundation of a culture of peace. Great religions inspire people to accept their neighbours with understanding and love, irrespective of individual or group distinctions.

Tolerance and acceptance are not only the key to avoiding the outbreak of conflict. They play an equally crucial role in conflict resolution. Surely the starting point for any constructive debate, for any attempt to bring conflicting parties together, must be acceptance of the other, tolerance for those people who are different, as well as for their ideas.

Tolerance should not be misconstrued as support. It is not necessary to support or endorse as correct the ideas promulgated by others. It is however necessary to accept the person, accept and tolerate as legitimate his or her differences and ideas. In a homogeneous, island society such as Japan, acceptance of diversity in people as well as among nations has been something alien to its history and therefore difficult to practice. This is all the more reason why a more open attitude has to develop in Japan towards "foreigners" as well as those who "act like foreigners".

Religion and religious leaders play a dual role in this regard. First, religions and their teachings must not be misused and exploited in a manner that promotes intolerance. Any effort to do so should lead to an outcry by religious leaders. Secondly, religions must be used as a stimulus to tolerance, tolerance in individuals, in communities, and in nations.

Given that intolerance is generally provoked by fear of the other, one must ask, "Are there traits or qualities shared by all humans that can be used to develop common ground between those who would otherwise consider themselves different from one another?" The best way to generate mutual tolerance is to get to know each other personally. But, beyond that, there are common values, shared by all religions, communities and societies. Although I make no claims to mystical insight, I would like to add my voice to those who believe that there are certain values shared by all societies, even if not followed in real life by all individuals.

Some have suggested that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constitutes the framework for such a value system. The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 by a vote of 48 to zero, with eight countries abstaining (five from the Soviet block, plus Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Yugoslavia). The 48 countries that voted in favour of the Declaration came from all parts of the world and represented all the world's major religions. There may be little question that the Universal Declaration represents a general standard to which all nations should strive. However, there is equally little doubt that the standards enunciated in the Declaration are not in actual fact universally upheld.

We would all certainly like to live in a world where the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are fully respected. Unfortunately, many societies have shown their lack of commitment to these rights, and have not held them up as values to be strictly adhered to. Furthermore, there is often an honest difference between countries in emphasis on which rights to give priority to; some societies, usually developed, industrialized ones, stress the importance of political and civil rights, while others mostly still in various stages of development, favour economic and social rights. Some people even criticize human rights as a Western concept, inappropriate to their own societies.

While I personally believe that the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration are common standards to which all societies ought to adhere, it is nonetheless clear that those standards are neither uniformly

applied nor accepted. Countries show great difference in the relative weight they give between several values. Consequently, human rights cannot at present serve as the operational guidelines for a set of values common to all of mankind.

There have been some more recent attempts to elucidate common human values. In Vienna in 1993, the United Nations convened a World Conference on Human Rights in an effort to break down the cultural and societal barriers preventing universal acceptance of established human rights norms. A total of 183 nations joined in adopting a Declaration and a Programme of Action. However, there was deep disagreement at the Conference over many of the same issues that had previously bedevilled efforts to develop a universal consensus on human rights. Although some progress was made, and the participation of 183 countries was significant, it remains clear that human rights do not yet provide the practical guidelines for the values for which we are searching.

Later that same year of 1993, in Chicago, the World parliament of Religions held a Conference entitled, "Towards a Global Ethic". Its aim was to formulate a minimal set of moral values that were already recognized by all the world's religions and cultures. The conference reached agreement on a Declaration which set forth a promising agenda for developing greater tolerance. However, the Declaration took a more maximalist perspective, that could be considered somewhat of a wish list, rather than a minimalist approach that could serve as the basis for universal consensus. The concept, however, is to be commended, and I hope that another similar effort will be made by such a distinguished body.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II, in his 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth), sought to establish a system of binding values for all of mankind, and to give guidance in answering the question "How do I distinguish between good and evil?" Again, this was an admirable goal, but the approach taken was ambitious and visionary. Thus, no matter how morally sound the system in the encyclical was, it offered little hope of obtaining universal acceptance for its implementation.

Finally, let me refer to a secular approach at illuminating common ground that held out much promise, but in the end did not firmly establish a basis of common values. Former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and former Guyanese Foreign Minister Shridath Rampal prepared the Report of the Commission on Global Governance, entitled "Our Global Neighbourhood". The authors concluded that, for the survival of mankind and the good of the planet, it was necessary for societies to learn to live and work peacefully together. To accomplish this goal, the authors adopted a three-fold approach that advocated: 1) development of a basis of core values; 2) development of a limited set of rights and responsibilities; and 3) changes in international norms so that they would embody those values.

I have great sympathy for this effort, and the highest respect for Mr. Carlsson and Mr. Rampal. Their approach is very similar to that generally taken by the United Nations on issues of universal concern. Yet these distinguished gentlemen, as others before them, also adopted something close to a maximalist position, which found ready intellectual support, but in the end could not obtain the universal adherence needed. For instance, the authors advocated that liberty be part of the core values that formed the basis of their approach. While few will dispute that human beings deserve to enjoy a life of liberty, it is a fact of the world that many of its people do not live in societies that protect or even

strive to promote liberty. Can we truly then claim that liberty or freedom is a core human value when for so many centuries, and in so many societies, these values have been routinely suppressed by authoritarian or autocratic rulers in favour of other values ?

So despite these valiant efforts, each with its own merits, and despite many other similar efforts, a set of basic human values has yet to be identified and agreed upon.

I believe that, in order to find truly universal acceptance, a genuinely realistic approach is necessary. I would argue for a basic set of human values, which could form the foundation for further development, much as in the approach taken by Carlsson and Rampal. I must here give credit to the American writer Sissela Bok, in whose works I came across a set of common values, which consists of three simple elements:

1. A system of justice.

All societies and religions provide, in one form or another, a basic system through which justice can be pursued, and right and wrong can be distinguished. A system of justice should not be confused with a particular judicial system of laws and courts, which many societies do not have in functioning form.

2. Opprobrium towards unjustified violence.

3. Opprobrium towards deceit.

All societies and religions are united in their disapproval of both unjustified violence and deceit. I say "unjustified" violence because virtually every society recognizes the right to legitimate self-defence, including in some cases when something intangible such as honour is at stake. Post-war Japan however be a unique exception to this rule, in that even the use of "the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence" is hotly debated in this country. I am not aware of any society that would condone one of its members if he were to walk into a neighbour's home, shoot the neighbour dead, and install himself in the neighbour's place with the neighbour's family.

Likewise with deceit. "Thou shalt not lie" is, of course, one of the Ten Commandments in the Bible. Yet the admonition is common to all societies and religions on a certain level. All of us recognizes that lying to achieve benefit is wrong.

This proposition, at first glance, may not appear to consist of much. However, it is meant as a starting point, a foundation on which to construct a larger edifice of more specific values. And, significantly, it meets the necessary condition of universality.

If we can accept my suggested set of human values, the next logical question would be; "To what purpose a system of common values ?" As I have mentioned, one of the most important purposes is to serve as the foundation for future progress in this field. Secondly, a universal set of common values can serve as a starting point for cross-cultural dialogue for parties involved in a dispute of one form or another, and who can perhaps agree on nothing else. My experience in international diplomacy and conflict resolution has shown me that, often, half of the battle is simply getting the parties to sit down together and talk about their dispute. Nothing can be achieved until a dialogue has begun. If parties

are so far apart on matters of substance, confirming their agreement on certain basic principles, such as the elements I have pointed out, could serve as an important starting point.

A third purpose served by a universal set of values is that it can serve as a challenge to those who initiate and perpetuate armed conflict. Wars and violence are often used as tools in pursuit of personal ambition by unscrupulous leaders. In such cases, it is the civilians who pay the heavy price exacted by the conflict, receive little if any benefit, and are powerless to influence the course of the conflict. An agreed-upon set of human values could be held up, in such cases, and the actions of those responsible for the people's misery could be judged against those values.

None of us are so naive as to think that such action would bring an immediate end to any conflict. But it could have a wholesome effect on those responsible, help to bring an end to the conflict, and may have a deterrent effect on some others who might consider resorting to violence.

My discussion thus far brings us, I believe, to a fundamental question for mankind, one with which all religions ought to be occupied, and one that a gathering such as your own, here in Kyoto, ought to consider. That question is, "Can worldwide peace be achieved? Can we build a world without war?"

Over the course of my long experience with the United Nations, working on issues of peace, security and disarmament, and as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in four war-torn countries, having seen the tragic human impact of violent conflict, I have often asked myself, "How is it that every society believes, on a certain level, that violence is wrong, yet the world is burdened by so many wars and other forms of violence?" Or, put in another way, as it was by Charlie Chaplin, the insightful social critic and great movie maker and actor, "Why is it that if you murder thousands of people in war, you are made a hero, but if you murder one person you are condemned?" In short, individual violence is condemned, while collective violence is extolled.

The question of whether war is an immutable characteristic of human society has been debated by philosophers across centuries. Those seeking to address the question have generally adopted one of three perspectives. First, there is the **realist approach**, which allows for any activity in pursuit of personal or national interests, and is perhaps best described in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Second, there is the **pacifist approach**, which eschews war under any circumstances. The third perspective is that of the **just war**, which permits armed conflict only if it is in pursuit of certain legitimate objectives, usually of a religious, moral or ideological nature. What constitutes a legitimate objective depends on the person writing the treatise. Two of the most famous advocates of the just-war perspective are, of course, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. We all know, however, that the thesis of "just war" has been used too often and much exploited. Humanity has therefore developed a healthy scepticism towards this school of thought.

Some others have blended, in a certain manner, the pacifist and realist approaches, and have argued that a stable international peace can be forged. Attainment of such a peace would not be through an appeal to mankind's higher moral side, but rather a realist appeal to the more basic instinct of survival. These thinkers, including such great philosophers as Kant, Erasmus and the Abbe de Saint-Pierre, have argued that war is preventable, not because peace was the natural human condition—they recognized

that it was not— but rather because it was in mankind's interest to survive and war was inimical to that interest. They challenged the fatalistic assumption that, just because war had always been a part of the human condition, it would always remain so.

I would agree with this perspective. Through my experience with conflict and conflict resolution, I have come to the conclusion that war is not inevitable; wars are either the result of wrong or willful choices made by people in decision making positions, or the consequence of a series of events and their cumulative escalation which became beyond any individual's control. Leaders should be faced with rational options which enable them to pursue their objectives in a peaceful, diplomatic manner or which will confront them with institutional constraints and a higher authority endowed with superior power.

These questions that I have been grappling with, together with the assistance of some philosophers, took on an even greater relevance to mankind with the advent of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. No longer were wars just a matter for the armies locked in battle, or even the civilian populations sustaining those armies. Quite suddenly, since 1945 the possibility of war erupting between the world's great nations became a matter of the gravest concern for every man and woman on the planet.

The end of the Cold War in 1991 has brought some benefits to all of us. But the threat and accompanying dangers of proliferation of not only weapons of mass destruction but also of all conventional kinds is certainly very much present with us. On the contrary, I would argue that, due to the unleashing of powers of science and technology buttressed by great economic machines, the world is under an unprecedented threat of major calamity at the hand of a few people today. A nuclear, biological or chemical weapon, in the hands of a terrorist, or a militant blind to all but his or her own cause, or a simply insane person, could wreak in a matter of moments the greatest of havoc that the world has ever known.

With the end of the Cold War, and the accompanying end of the bi-polar world, a lasting international peace depends on complex linkages between the individual, community, society, and nation, and between local, domestic and international politics. The linkages between these diverse actors is hard to discern and comprehend, not least because it is still in the process of construction, and constantly being transformed. To confront the challenges, and to unite those actors, the world is in need of a clearer political and moral framework than has existed before. Such a framework will help manage interactions between communities, and provide a standard against which behaviour can be adjusted or judged.

Even so-called realists, when confronted with the spectre of mass destruction, recognize the benefits of working together, on a multi-lateral basis, rather than simply building weapons to fight against. Surely it is this recognition that explains, in large part, the motivation of those retired army generals and nuclear scientists who are amongst the most eloquent crusaders for disarmament.

Development of this new and more complex political and moral framework will not be possible without the active participation of religious leaders. Such a framework will not result from just one conference. But it can eventually be established, and every effort that brings us closer to that goal is worthwhile. I see this gathering as one forward step on that path.

I would like to conclude with some final remarks. I hope that you will not consider me presumptuous if I offer my views on what role religious leaders can constructively play in the universal pursuit of world peace and human wisdom. My views are the result of personal reflection on the general topic, and also on my experience in international diplomacy. In particular, while engaged in efforts at resolving intractable conflicts, I recognize the need for a comprehensive approach that combines efforts of international mediators with those of other influential figures, be they religious, educational, political, moral, civic, or from other walks of life.

No one can do this alone; every bit of extra help is useful. Please be assured that I make my suggestions with the greatest of humility and respect for each religion's separate identity, and its right to decide for itself how it wishes to contribute to the overall goal of world peace.

In my opinion, the four most basic and indispensable goals for religions and religious leaders, in this general field, are:

One, to ensure that religion is not used as a pretext or a justification for persecution or violence, as has often been the case.

Two, to use the teachings of the world's great religions to spread moral values, to ensure that people are not only "book smart", but are also well-rounded and morally educated. This will give individuals the strength of conviction to stand-up to agitators who may wish to resort to violence.

Three, when communities are plunged into violent conflict, to use moral and religious teachings to speak out against the recourse to violence, to condemn the policies of leaders that have brought about the conflict, and to support the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Four, following the end of a conflict, to promote reconciliation between the communities; this is a particularly difficult task that requires courage and the ability to confront deeply held communal prejudices.

Related to all of these four roles is the need promote tolerance based on the notion of human brotherhood, and the acceptance of others who are different from us. Religious leaders are best positioned among all of societies' leaders to challenge the "epidemic of intolerance" that appears to be spreading in parts of the world, just as it is being driven back in others.

On the one hand, the world is full of examples of progress in fostering tolerance and of innate human goodness, and on the other hand, of terrible intolerance and of horrible cruelty of man against another man. It is perhaps the greatest challenge for all great religions, as we approach the 21st century, to nurture and develop that which is good in all men and women, while confronting and challenging that which is cruel and evil in all us. In essence, this has been the challenge of the world's religions, across centuries. With the spread of weapons of unspeakable destructive power, with the weakening of traditional state structures and of international borders, and with the increased contact between societies, this challenge has never been greater, or held as much at stake for mankind as it does today. While the challenge I have described is great, I am firmly convinced it can be met, and the goal of world peace can be achieved. Surely, nothing about it will be simple, or come easily. We must be realistic yet

optimistic; patient yet committed. In the end, we will prevail.

I would like to leave you with a quote from Czech President Vaclav Havel, one of the greatest philosophers of our era. It combines the spirit of pragmatic optimism and admonition that I believe is necessary to bring us to our goal.

"I have been given to understand how small this world is and how it torments itself with countless things it need not torment itself with, if people could find within themselves a little more courage, a little more hope, a little more responsibility, a little more mutual understanding and love."

Following these words of wisdom, I would just like once again to pay my respects to the distinguished members of the audience, to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you on this solemn occasion, and to extend to you my best wishes for success as you ponder the most important issue of our times.

Thank you.

PROFILE | Mr. Yasushi Akashi Under-Secretary-General, the United Nations

Born in Akita Prefecture, Japan in 1931.

Graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Tokyo in 1954. Went to the United States by Fulbright-Hays grant and studied at the University of Virginia and Fletcher School of Law.

Became the first United Nations staff in Japan in 1957. Successively appointed to Ambassador in the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN, Under-Secretary-General both for Disarmament Affairs and for Public Information.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) from March, 1992 to September, 1993.

Served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Former Yugoslavia from January, 1994.

Made an inspection of a flooded district in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) as a chief of the Bureau of Humanitarian Solution on June, 1997.

Major Publications: *The United Nations, From a window of the United nation's building, The World Observed from the United Nations, An Agenda for Hope, Patience and Hope—560 days in Cambodia*, etc.

Religious Co-operation And Reconciliation Between Peoples

Francis Cardinal Arinze

President

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1. Reconciliation between peoples is highly desirable. Indeed, it is a necessity if peace and tranquillity are to reign. Reconciliation is also a felt need of the human heart, of families, and of societies big and small. No religion worthy of the name can be indifferent to this dimension of human existence.

The Japan Conference of Religious Representatives is therefore to be congratulated that in its programme for the celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the 1987 Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei, it has chosen once more to focus attention on prayer for peace, including this aspect of reconciliation.

In putting before this August assembly the following reflection on the co-operation of the religions for the promotion of reconciliation between peoples, I shall begin by touching with the finger tips, as it were, some areas or sectors of life between peoples where reconciliation is needed. The paths to reconciliation will next be examined, together with an assessment of this different but necessary virtue. The role of the religions will then be considered, with special emphasis on the need for their co-operation. How the religions can motivate other agents of reconciliation will be suggested. A Christian vision on reconciliation will bring those reflections to a close.

I. LIFE SECTORS WHERE RECONCLILIATION IS NEEDED

When we say reconciliation our mind goes to forgiveness given and forgiveness received, amendment made and unity restored, disagreements overcome and peace reinstated. There are many sectors of life where this soothing social balm or ointment is needed.

2. Race or Ethnicity

Sometimes there is misunderstanding, tension or even violence between peoples because of their different racial or ethnic origins. It may be that painful memories of past events involving racial discrimination or ethnic conflict continue to haunt present generations. Reconciliation is needed.

3. Social Status

At other times the difficulty in relationships is due to different outlooks between young and old, learned and unlearned, or between people regarded as freeborn or noble and others looked upon as of lower caste.

Reconciliation becomes necessary.

4. Material Well-being

Tension easily arises between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the well-fed and the hungry and therefore often also angry. Some people talk of the rich north and the poor south of the earth, of the developed and of the developing countries. Some even talk of first, second, third and even forth worlds. The experts tell us that 20% of humanity in the first world consume 80% of the world's resources.

Who does not see in this situation the need for positive action towards reconciliation ?

5. Possessions and Power

Possessions and power lend themselves easily to situations of polarization and tension. Between the great landlords and the landless peasants or serfs who work for them, between the capitalist industrialist and the workers employed by him, there can be tension. So also can there be misunderstandings between government and citizens, between trade rivals, between political parties and even between teaching staff and students.

All the above are situations where good mutual understanding, reconciliation and collaboration are needed.

6. Human Dignity

When human dignity is not respected we have type of relationships usually associated with colonizers and colonized, exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed, slavers and slaves.

Conversion and justice will prepare people for reconciliation in such situations.

7. Persecution

Some people are persecuted or discriminated against because of their religion, language, ethnic or national origin. For others it is merely because they are women or on account of the colour of their skin.

It is immaterial whether such people constitute minorities or not. A recognition of their

fundamental human dignity and consequent rights is a necessary route to reconciliation.

8. Violence and War

Violence and war lead to destruction and to injuries, which may be temporary or permanent. Between the violent person and the victims of this violence, between the promoters of war and those who suffer as a result—the killed, the wounded, the hungry, the uprooted and the homeless—how can there be peace unless there is true change of heart followed by reparation ?

Reconciliation is the desire and prayer of all who are aware of the ravages caused by violence and war.

9. Between Religions

Sometimes between two or more religions there can be unhealthy rivalry and the use of unjust or unworthy methods in order to win new members. There can be tension between moderates and extremists or fundamentalists even within the same religion.

A return to the call of every genuine religion to love and reconciliation is indicated in such cases.

In such and situations of misunderstanding, tension, injustice, violence or war, what is the road to reconciliation ? What values can be drawn from the various religions in the quest for an answer ?

II. PATHS TO RECONCILIATION

The route to true and lasting reconciliation passes through truth and mutual knowledge, justice, repentance and reparation, sharing and good leadership.

10. Truth and Mutual Knowledge

If unhappy relationships such as those described above are to be satisfactorily resolved, it is first of all necessary that the truth be known by all concerned. It is important that an objective assessment of the situation be shared between those who are suffering in a given relationship and those who are believed to be the cause of the suffering. They have to learn to communicate with one another, to open out to one another and to open up or discuss frankly the problem in question.

Dialogue is not a luxury. It is a necessity. This mutual listening, reciprocal giving and receiving, effort to understand one another better, and joint seeking of the truth, is most healthy and liberating. For the solution of some difficult questions, sincere dialogue is

indispensable. There can rarely be too much of it.

Where half-truths or falsehood or lies are sown, there suspicion and division are bound to flourish. Misleading statements made for the sake of political, ideological, group or other interests, are also damaging to reconciliation. Forgiveness requires truth. The first act demanded of the offender is a truthful acknowledgement of the evil done to the other.

Some countries which have experienced serious conflict have set up procedures for ascertaining the truth with a view to reconciliation. This can help, provided that prudent care is taken not to increase pains and magnify contrasts and so render reconciliation even more difficult. What is certain is that the covering up of wrongs done does not lead to true reconciliation.

Apart from religious and political leaders, educators and parents and the operators of the mass media have exceptional power to help all parties concerned in a strained relationship to attain and communicate the truth to one another.

11. Justice

Justice is the next major prerequisite for reconciliation. The Greek Philosophers already saw the importance of the virtue of justice by rating it among the four "cardinal" virtues, that is, those virtues around which all other virtues are grouped. The other three are prudence, fortitude and temperance.

Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give to others what is their due. Towards fellow human beings, justice disposes one to respect the rights of others and to establish harmony in human relationships.

Among the human rights which we could mention are the right to life in all its stages, from conception to natural death, the right to be respected and accepted as a person and therefore to be treated as a subject and not to be turned into an object to be utilized and then cast aside, the right to work, to possess material goods and to get a fair share of the fruits of one's labour, the right to free expression in society and the right to religious freedom.

A high expression of this respect for the rights of other persons is found in the Golden Rule: "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you" (Mt 7:12). This injunction, found in Christianity, is also part of the patrimony of most religions. Moreover, Jesus Christ goes on to give his law of love for one another: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 22:39).

Quite the opposite attitude is that of religious fanaticism which deserves special mention here because it is a most regretful form of violation of justice. The religious fanatic, fundamentalist or extremist sometimes wants to justify oppression of others, violence and conflicts by appealing to religious motives. Such people are gravely mistaken. Violence against others does not promote genuine religion. "If there exists a struggle worthy of man" says Pope John Paul II in his 1992 message for the World Day of Peace (n. 7) "it is the struggle against his own disordered passions, against every kind of selfishness, against attempts to oppress others, against every type of hatred and violence: in short, against everything that is the exact opposite of peace and reconciliation".

The wise Buddha had already told us: "Between the person who wins in battle one thousand times and thereby has one thousand enemies and the one who wins only over self, this latter is the best of the winners of every battle" (Dhammapada, 103, in Canone Buddista, Torino 1968, p. 112).

12. Repentance and Reparation

For reconciliation, it is necessary that the offender should regret the wrong done and repair as much as possible. Indeed, reparation is a requirement of justice so that the offender does not gain from the evil act, and the one offender who is asked to forgive is not cheated. The act of reparation, however, has to be within the possibilities of the repentant offender, with due respect for his or her human dignity. This is why most people, countries and religions do not favour capital punishment, but urge that an acceptable alternative way of making reparation be found, a way which leave the door open to repentance and rehabilitation of the offender in society.

13. Sharing in daily life

Many situations of tension or conflict can be resolved through the unglamorous path of daily co-existence and sharing of efforts. In this matter, individual believers in the various religions may achieve quicker results than perhaps their religious leaders who at times may be weighed down by century-old customs and protocol. Very often efforts at reconciliation have to begin quietly, without publicity, and these can be accomplished more easily by people who do not have a high profile. In the conflicts which may arise in family life, in the work-place, at national or international levels, there will be a need to engage in the task of mutual listening in order to repair the damage done and build up new relationships. This interaction will be hard work, but it will also be a source of satisfaction. The dialogue of life is highly recommended, not just for co-existence but even more for collaboration.

14. Good leadership

Reconciliation is greatly helped by good and far-sighted leadership in matters social, cultural, political, economic or religious. Leaders who



are serene, balanced and self-controlled, and who manifest a high degree of understanding of human fragility, are important agents who open the doors and indicate the paths to true reconciliation.

III. RECONCILIATION A DIFFICULT BUT NECESSARY VIRTUE

15. The burden of history

Reconciliation is no easy virtue when historical memories weigh down a people. The heavy burden of oppression, violence, conflict or war which brought about much suffering among one's forebears cannot be easily laid aside. It leaves a residue of fear, suspicion, division and sometimes even hatred among families, ethnic groups or whole peoples. Human logic sometimes yields to the temptation to revenge, to make the offenders or their children pay dearly for their deeds, or to teach them a lesson that they will never forget.

These are harsh realities which put the good will of promoters of reconciliation to a hard test. One solution is to facilitate a correct reading of history. The history of conflict with other peoples should be written and read without bias. This is not an easy recommendation. It demands the effort to try to understand why the other people feel the way they do. History is often written by the victors or the dominant group. To be truly objective it needs to take into account the perceptions of all parties involved. Rarely are mistakes all on one side. National historical accounts should therefore be on the watch for the tendency to become slanted in favour of one's country, ethnic group or religion.

Respect for difference is another useful recommendation for genuine relationships. To deny differences is to deny the identity of the other. And even when the suppression of differences appears to be successful, it is often a case of only an apparent peace, because a volatile situation is created which is generally a prelude to fresh outbreaks of disagreement, tension or violence. Historical records that are unpleasant have to be dealt with honestly and with moral courage.

16. Sometimes demands heroic effort

Reconciliation sometimes demands efforts that borders on the heroic.

If a person loses a child, a sister, a brother, a parent, or some other loved one, or even the whole family as a result of war, terrorism or criminal acts, the temptation to close in on oneself is very real.

People deprived of their homes, of their work or of all the possessions they have held dear to them, refugees suddenly forced by war or other acts of violence to go they know not where, and people humiliated by hunger and disease as a result of human misdeeds, can feel hatred arising within them and the urge to revenge.

In such trying moments only something like deep religious convictions and the warmth of present human relationships, of acceptance, respect, understanding and love, can help overcome these feeling and temptations. Only this can help one to retain one's emotional balance. Here religious considerations do come in very much. For those who have a strong belief in God, love and forgiveness have a special healing power to help recover from such wounds, because love and forgiveness have their origin in God. Human beings are only reflecting a little of His bounty and goodness when they love, forgive and offer reconciliation.

17. Postwar Reconciliation

Reconciliation is particularly difficult after a war. Those who prosecute war generally tell us that they want thereby to "solve" problems. But they leave in their wake victims and relics of destruction which do not facilitate reconciliation, unless, of course, they were seeking the peace of the cemetery, the silent and cold peace between the dead and those who killed them.

All people of good will, and in particular the followers of world religions, are called to rise above the culture of war in order to install a culture of peace. Where a human problem really exists, there must be a peaceful and honourable way to solve it. War is not inevitable. The arms industry, and the arms trafficking which almost inevitably ensues, should give way to investments in agriculture and industry, thus building up the economy for the benefit of all. Swords should be hammered into ploughshares and spears into sickles (cf. Is 2:4).

18. Reconciliation is a Sign of Greatness

Reconciliation is no sign of weakness. Indeed it shows a high level of virtue. The capacity and willingness to ask pardon, to forgive from the heart and to pursue co-operation indicate strong moral fibre. Revenge, on the other hand, is an act of surrender, a sign of lack of strength.

"We all need to be forgiven by others", says Pope John Paul II, "so we must all be ready to forgive. Asking and granting forgiveness is something profoundly worthy of man; sometimes it is the only way out of situations marked by age-old and violent hatred" (1997 World Peace Day Message, 4).

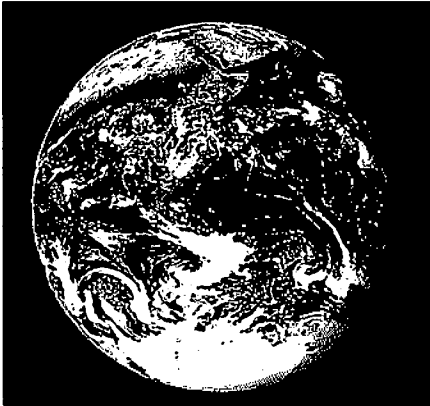
19. Necessary Road to Peace

Reconciliation is an obligatory route to peace in situations where relationships have been damaged or destroyed. How can a process of peace that will last ever begin unless the people involved allow an attitude of forgiveness to permeate their hearts ?

When we take a look at the history of failed reconciliation attempts, we find that wherever

sincere repentance and forgiveness are lacking, wounds continue to fester. Moreover the younger generation is given bad example by the elders. It is then not difficult to see how the desire for revenge can be nurtured into causing fresh outbreaks of violence.

In order, therefore, to arrive at authentic and lasting peace, offering and accepting forgiveness, that is reconciliation, is an obligatory route. On this road, the majority of humankind want to be inspired by and accompanied by their religion. And if the various religions will co-operate in doing this, it is all to the good. This is our next consideration.



IV. DUTY OF RELIGIONS TO WORK FOR RECONCILIATION

20. Response to deep Desire of the Human Heart

In the various religions people seek answers to the deep desires of the human heart and to the serious and difficult questions concerning human existence. One of these unquenchable desires is the aspiration to reconciliation and peace.

In a world ever made smaller by modern science and technology, in a world of growing mutual dependence and mutual vulnerability through the use of terrible weapons of destruction, the desire for solidarity and sharing and the yearning of many hearts for security and freedom, and for assurance of reconciliation with others, must engage the attention of any religion worthy of the name. Reconciliation is often associated with, and is always helped by, genuine religious belief and practice.

21. The Religions extol Reconciliation and Peace

All religions extol reconciliation and peace.

When I look into my own religion, Christianity, I find that it sets high value on both. Jesus Christ guarantees to his authentic followers his own peace, that lasting peace which the world cannot give (cf. Jn 14:27). It is attained through love of God and neighbour, through struggling to overcome egoism and through willingness to be reconciled to God and with one another.

In Hinduism the Sanskrit word often used for peace is *santi*. Tranquillity, calmness of mind, absence of passion and peace in its social aspects are stressed.

According to the teaching of Buddha, peace is realized negative by through the practice of non-violence (*ahimsā*), and positively through the perfection of benevolence-compassion (*maitrī-karūṇā*) towards all living beings. This ideal of *ahimsā* is also shared by Sikhs and Jains. Buddha says: "Hatred is never appeased by hatred. It is soothed by love. This is the eternal law" (Dhammapada, 5, in Canone Buddhista, p. 99).

Judaism inculcates love, truth and obedience to the commandments of God. It is from this that *shalom* flows, a mark of the messianic kingdom where righteousness and peace embrace (cf. Ps 85:11). *Shalom* is holistic, all inclusive; a wish and a blessing, it embraces harmony with God, with self, with others and with creation.

In Islam, peace, *Salām* is one of the Beautiful names of God. When Muslims greet one another, in prayer as in daily life, they offer to their neighbour this divine quality by saying *Al-salām 'alaykum !* (Peace be with you).

On the island of Java in Indonesia, peace is understood by Muslims, Christians and Hindus alike as a three-tiered goal of human life in God's created world:

peace with the cosmos, harmony with nature;
peace in the human family;
peace within the human heart, a deep interior peace.

The various traditional or tribal religions pray to God, to the spirits and to the ancestors for the gift of reconciliation, tranquility and peace.

These are just a few examples. There are distinguished people here present who could say much more about reconciliation and peace in their own religions.

22. Religions can motivate people for Reconciliation

The religions have great power to motivate people towards reconciliation. For deeply religious motives people are ready to acknowledge their failures and offences, to repent and to ask forgiveness. The same motivations also persuade people to forgive and to be reconciled. Religion helps people not to allow themselves to be dominated by destructive self-interest or, worse still, by inveterate hatred for those regarded as enemies. Without religion, the exit from such difficult situations is often neither visible nor available.

Experience teaches us that genuine religion lived with sincerity cannot fail to promote peace and fraternity between peoples, because it fosters an even closer bond with God who is good and merciful. That is why in 1986, when Pope John Paul II invited the world religions to come to Assisi to pray and fast for peace, he stressed the solidarity of believers and the importance of the religions in the quest for peace in the world.

23. Co-operation between the Religions

Each religion has its own way of considering the actions to be accomplished and of describing the road to be followed in order to attain reconciliation and peace. Without

ignoring the differences between the religions or minimizing their importance, it is becoming increasingly necessary to recognize that growing interdependence and communication between peoples make it practically obligatory for the religions to co-operate in efforts to promote reconciliation. The religions are also realizing more and more their considerable responsibilities with regard to the true good of humanity, as well as the power they have to advance reconciliation, especially when they act together or co-ordinate their programmes.

There are several values which many religions share and which can come in useful in the work of reconciliation. Examples are reflection or mediation, prayer, acceptance of guilt where it exists, gratuitous giving, the Golden Rule, the need to ask God for pardon, community spirit and the sense of sharing in the same family. When followers of various religions engage in concrete projects of peace-making or reconciliation, they will not fail to draw from these values.

Many tensions, problems and challenges take no notice of religious frontiers. Conflicts or strained relations between races or ethnic groups, between people of different social status, rich and poor, employer and employee, oppressor and oppressed, the violent and their victims, do not respect religious belonging. They therefore require that all religions join hands in order to seek adequate and lasting solutions.

Pope John Paul II accordingly declared in his 1992 Message for the Day of Peace (n. 6) "Interreligious contacts, together with ecumenical dialogue, now seem to be obligatory paths, in order to ensure that the many painful wounds inflicted over the course of centuries will not be repeated, and indeed that any such wounds still remaining will soon be healed".

The religions can also inspire and co-operate with the United Nations or its agencies, and also with continental, regional or local organizations, to develop practical mechanisms for reconciliation and encourage mediation. There is no doubt that the religions have the duty to call humanity to undertake the pilgrimage of reconciliation and to accompany it on that journey.

24. Meditation and Prayer

One of the ways in which the religions contribute to provide spiritual foundations for reconciliation is through the promotion of meditation and prayer.

By prayer—intense, humble, confident and persevering—believers open themselves to the saving action of God. Meditation and prayer help believers to reflect, to see themselves as they are and not just as they would like to be seen. A consequence is that the offender is rendered more willing to acknowledge faults, to repent and to ask for forgiveness, instead of engaging in pointless self-justification.

Meditation and prayer therefore help to bring people together and to nourish mutual esteem and acceptance and love for others. If in that climate they appreciate better their duties as citizens, they will be better able to build up a more peaceful world. When believers humbly put themselves in God's presence in prayer according to their different religious traditions, they are able to meet one another at a level where inequalities,

misunderstandings, bitterness and hostility are overcome, because they all sincerely seek God, the Lord and Father of all. Prayer is therefore already a positive contribution to reconciliation and to peace.

V. RELIGIONS CAN INSPIRE OTHER AGENTS OF RECONCILIATION

25. The above reflections do not want to give the impression that the religions are the only promoters of reconciliation. Indeed there are many other agents of reconciliation. But these agents can be aided, or inspired or motivated by the various religions acting singly or together. Let us single out some of these agents.

Parents, who are the primary and most irreplaceable educators of their children, can be inspired by their religions to inculcate attitudes of trust and acceptance, love and forgiveness, harmony and unity in their children. They do this best by their actions, but also by instruction.

Educators who teach the young such disciplines as history, geography, ethics and sociology have many opportunities to aid the young to read the account of their past with objectivity, to esteem other peoples and cultures and to learn to live in a pluralistic world. Religious values are highly relevant to these endeavours.

Operators of the mass media have great power for good. They can extol mutual respect among people. They can show the virtue of reconciliation as a sign of a high moral stature. They have the power to exhibit the moral bankruptcy of hatred, falsehood, vendetta and violence. A high religious culture will help them to achieve these goals.

Public authorities can be inspired to respect the religious conscience of their citizens and to appreciate the contribution of religion to culture, to the all-round development of peoples, to peace and to reconciliation. A high religious sense will help them to resist the temptation to exploit religion as a means to power. Rather they will work out ways to encourage the religions individually and together to contribute to the common good.

In each country, especially in areas marked by conflict or social tension, the religions will do well to examine their consciences on how they have discharged their role of encouraging other agents of reconciliation.

VI. CONTRIBUTION OF CATHOLIC CHURCH TO RECONCILIATION

To conclude, let me become a little personal. It is not enough to say that the religions should promote reconciliation. It is also necessary for each of us to ask himself or herself: How has my religion contributed to reconciliation? In a few words, may I state how my religion, or more precisely the Catholic Church, strives to contribute to reconciliation.

26. God rich in Mercy

My faith teaches me that God is rich in mercy, full of forgiveness for those who come back to him (cf. Ez 18:23; Is 38:17; Ps 32:5; 103:8-14; Epb 2:4-5; II Cor 1:3). God's rain falls on the field of the just and of the unjust (cf. Mt 5:45).

God's love for all humanity goes beyond human understanding and is the foundation of the reconciliation to which all peoples are called. God's forgiving love for all was so great that the Eternal Father sent his only Son as man to the world for the salvation of the whole of humanity.

27. Jesus Christ practised and taught Reconciliation

Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, preached a gospel of peace (cf. Epb 6:15). He is called the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6). Peace is his precious gift to his disciples: "My peace I give to you" (Jn 14:17; cf. also Jn 20:19, 26). In the manifesto of the kingdom that he was inaugurating, Jesus declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God" (Mt 5:9).

Jesus taught his follower not to engage in vendetta, not to demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but "on the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well...if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him" (Mt 5:39, 41).

His teaching is that reconciliation with our neighbour is necessary before God will hear our prayers or accept our sacrifices: "If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering" (Mt 5:23-24). God will forgive us our trespasses only if we forgive those who trespass against us (cf. Mt 6:12). The servant who was forgiven a very large sum of money by his master, but who refused to forgive his fellow servant a very small sum, was condemned (cf. Mt 18:23-35). The parable of the prodigal son is a manifestation of God's forgiving love (cf. Lk 15:11-32).

Jesus Christ not only taught forgiveness and reconciliation. He also lived it. On the cross he forgave those who were crucifying him and prayed for them (cf. Lk 23:34).

28. The Catholic Church sees Reconciliation as her mission

The Catholic Church sees herself as in the service of reconciliation, as a "sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity" (Lumen Gentium, 1). St. Paul sees his ministry as one of reconciliation: "It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation" (II Cor 5:18).

The Catholic Church has a solemn rite called the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance, in obedience to the words of Christ, "For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven" (Jn 20:23). The practice of public, and subsequently also private Penance, followed by reconciliation has been carefully preserved by the Church for almost two thousand years.

The Catholic Church promotes reconciliation with other Christian Churches or ecclesial communities by ecumenism. The Second Vatican Council, a solemn assembly of all Catholic Bishops in the world held between 1962 and 1965, was very insistent on the urgency of Christian reconciliation. Only five weeks ago, most Christian Churches in Europe held a one-week meeting in Graz, Austria, to stress the search for a more visible unity and greater commitment to the reconciliation of peoples.

As is well known, the Second Vatican Council also promoted dialogue and mutual understanding and co-operation between Christians and believers in other religions. Pope John Paul II, in his visit to Japan in 1981, demonstrated this commitment in an unmistakable way. In his address to Japanese Religious Leaders on 24 February 1981 he even quoted the Grand master Saicho, Founder of Tendai Buddhism in Japan who said: "To forget one's self and serve others is the summit of benevolence-compassion". And the Japanese religions have reciprocated beautifully. The Pope urges Christians to prepare to enter the forthcoming century and millennium by greater efforts at reconciliation (cf. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 33, 34).

The Catholic Church has also contributed to the reconciliation of countries which were on the brink of war at their frontiers, or to peace making after conflicts. I can testify that during and after the civil war in my country Nigeria thirty years ago, my Catholic faith was a big factor in enabling me as a Bishop to help promote reconciliation. But it would take us too long to go into detail here.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished representatives of the Japanese religions and of the religions in the world, co-operation in the promotion of reconciliation between people is for the religions an honour and at the same time a responsibility. And which world religion would not want to respond ?

PROFILE

Francis Cardinal Arinze

President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

Born in Eziowelle, Nigeria in 1932.

Education: a) Philosophy, in Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu, Nigeria. b) Théology, in Urban University, Rome. c) Education, in University of London Institute of Education.

Career to Date: Archbishop of Onitsha, Nigeria, 1967-1985, President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, since 1984. Made Cardinal by Pope John Paul II, 1985.

Publications: *Alone With God* (1987), *Meeting Other Believers* (1997), etc.

Awards: Ph. D. (Hon. Causa) University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1986.



SPECIAL MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

Stomu Yamash'ta

Born in Kyoto, Japan, in 1947. Went to the United States at age 17. After studying classic music and jazz, created a new genre of percussion music. Collaborated with many world-famous orchestras, such as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, etc. He gained world repute as "the percussionist who changed the image of percussion." In 1972, organized a group, called, "Red Buddha Theater" which was a fusion of theatrical play and concert, and gave more than 500 performances. Meanwhile, formed a rock'n'roll group "GO" and actively made global and cross-over performances. In 1972, received the "New Artists Award" from the Minister of Education of Japan. In 1973, nominated for Grammy Awards for Composing and Directing. In 1980, studied Buddhist music at Toji Temple in Kyoto and created a new style of ritual service, entitled "Kuon-shiki" (memorial service through music), and convened Kuon-shiki services both in Japan and Stonehenge, U.K. Meanwhile, worked on the sound track music of both Japanese and foreign films. Received the Best Music Award from Japan Academy Awards in 1984, for the sound track music of the film "Kukai" directed by Junya Sato. Thereafter, successively received various awards. Received invitations from various countries for concerts and the directorships of arts and music.

Sanukite

"Sanukite" stone is a product of the Sanuki district on Shikoku Island, located in western Japan. Ancient people used this stone to make swords and axes more than 30 thousand years ago. A German mineralogist named it Sanukite in modern times. Dr. Hitoshi Maeda, who is from Sanuki, wanted to revive the ancient tool in today's lifestyle, and devoted most of his time to studying the stone. He was particularly interested in ancient Chinese literature, and studied many different traditional instruments. One of them was the kei, a musical instrument created in a civilized area along the Yellow River in China about 5,000 years ago, and still used today. He also received many experts' advice, including that of musicians and scientists, in order to create an instrument made of the legendary stone. In 1981, a first trial production of a stone xylophone with 30 keys and the range of 2.5 octaves was manufactured. Ten years later, in 1991, "the Sanukite xylophone" was finally completed after repeated analyses and experiments on Sanukite's peculiar vibration and wave forms. Stomu Yamash'ta, the Sanukite player, gave the stone of a pre-historic age a new life in the contemporary music scene.

Special Musical Performance



1 Opening

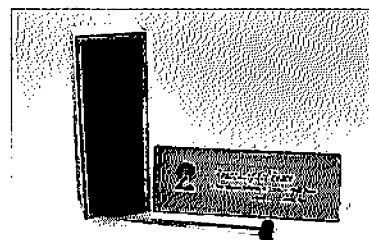
COSMOS

2 Prayer for Peace; Resonating for Peace to the World

PEACE AND LOVE

3 Epilogue

FOR THE FUTURE





Session 1

Interfaith Cooperation and World Peace

- Theme ① The Religious Peace Movement
and Ethnic Disputes
- Theme ② East-West Religious Dialogue
and Mutual Understanding
- Theme ③ Contribution to Humanity
and the Solidarity of Religion
- Theme ④ The Development and Future
Prospects of Religious Dialogue

Theme

① The Religious Peace Movement and Ethnic Disputes

Let us Continue the Path to Peace!

Professor Agostino Giovagnoli
Community of St. Egidio



I would like first of all to thank all the representatives of Japanese religions who have organized this meeting, inviting a delegation from the S.Egidio community and giving me the opportunity of addressing this illustrious gathering. As you know, the S.Egidio community has for some time been deeply involved in inter-religious dialogue, in arranging prayer for peace and in concrete initiatives for solidarity among peoples. To achieve those purposes, the community has maintained for some time a collaborative rapport with all the religions here present, whose representatives I greet with deep respect and fraternal friendship.

The title of our meeting today is The Religious Peace Movement and Ethnic Disputes. I would like to speak first of the commitment of the religions to peace. We know that religious groups can become involved in conflict among themselves: this happened in the past and it also happens sometimes today in some parts of the world. But this meeting, on the tenth anniversary of the first summit meeting on Mount Hiei shows us the commitment of the religions to peace.

Ten years ago on the initiative of the Most Reverend Etai Yamada, the first peace meeting of Japanese religions was held here with well-known representatives of many world religions. The idea arose from the meeting held a year earlier in 1986 when Pope John Paul II invited religious leaders to come together in Assisi, Italy, to pray for peace. Every year since then, the S.Egidio community has organized a prayer meeting similar to the one held at Assisi in which religious leaders from Japan and all over the world have participated. Thus while every year international "Peoples and Religions" meetings were taking place in Rome, Warsaw, Brussels, Milan and elsewhere, Japanese religions gathered at Mount Hiei to continue in the spirit of Assisi.

Progress has been made during these ten years in Europe, in Japan and in other parts of the world. Meeting each year, getting to know one another and praying together has forged strong bonds of friendship among people of different nations, cultures and religions. This progress has above all contributed to forming a common conviction, the conviction that all religions promote peace and not war. No religion actually tells its adherents to wage war, though there are those who use religion to promote terrible and bloody conflicts. Members of all faiths thus have a very important task, to search the depths of their own beliefs in order to find the seeds of love and peace contained there.

Gathered here we think particularly of the treasures of wisdom contained in Japanese religions. We

know that the teachings of Buddha exhort his followers to avoid anything that would cause pain to themselves or to others. We know that the ideal of profound harmony in nature and in society is part of the Shinto tradition. Japan is a land in which different ancient religions live together peacefully in the same religions, in families and even within individuals without becoming a source of disagreement or conflict. Moreover, in the last ten years these religions have been open to dialogue with other faiths and in particular with Christianity. This is unprecedented in Japan's history. After two millennia of indifference and, at times, hostility, Buddhists, Shinto and Christians meet together today in fraternal dialogue. The passionate appeal of the Most Venerable Etai Yamada in 1989 in Warsaw and in 1992 in Brussels still resounds in our hearts. He invited every believing person to question themselves on their responsibility for the tragedy of the second world war and to strive to ensure that a similar tragedy should never happen again.

The commitment to seek and to find the energy for peace in the different religions is being pursued tenaciously by many men and women of religion since the Assisi meeting of 1986. Several projects have been begun for different purposes and in many different parts of the world, from Europe to Asia, from Africa to South America. I remember also how in 1991 on the occasion of the meeting of "Peoples and Religions" in Malta, Muslims, Christians and Jews launched an appeal for peace in Palestine. This call was renewed in 1995 in Jerusalem when the leaders of religions planted an olive tree as a symbol of peace. Even if peace is still far off in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean, it is important that people of faith should show themselves to be openly opposed to war.

These examples show that the religions can do a great deal to bring about peace. Today the world is very different from ten years ago. Gone is the balance of terror in which the two blocks countered strength with strength, keeping the world under constant threat of nuclear conflict. However, while this enormous threat has gone, new threats have appeared. If the evil of a third world war has receded, local conflicts have become more likely. In Europe which has known several decades of peace, there have now arisen many focal points of tension, notably the former Yugoslavia and in Albania. Recent episodes of ethnic terrorism have occurred in important Western European countries such as Spain. In Central and Latin America ethnic conflicts have become interwoven with social problems and economic inequality for which violence cannot provide a solution. Particular preoccupations awaken difficult situations not far from here — such as that of Cambodia — a land soaked with the blood of one of the largest genocide of the twentieth century which became one of the greatest tragedies of history provoked by mad projects of ethnic regeneration.

But today we want in particular to remember Africa where disturbances of immense importance are taking place, which are afflicting millions of men and women: we think in particular of the Great Lakes region in the heart of sub-Saharan Africa where precarious balances are being upset and many transition are beginning. In this region it is not only big ethnic conflicts that are taking place: it is not enough only to talk about the clashes between different tribal groups. Looking superficially at the so-called ethnic conflict is a dangerous temptation for those, like ourselves, who see them from the outside. In reality, in Burundi as in the Congo, in southern Sudan as in Liberia, complex economic and political elements come into play, often the inheritance of colonialism or the cold war. Many people think and say "We need to leave Africa to herself because there is nothing that can be done," so the African peoples seem abandoned, left to drift towards the margins of history.

People of faith must mobilize themselves against this way of talking. They can never say "It doesn't concern me" because for the believer, where there is a man there is a brother. They cannot say "the responsibility for violence rests only with those who practice it" because every faith presses one to look into one's own heart and question oneself about one's own responsibility whether it is more or less direct. Neither can people of faith close their ears to the cry for help of the poor, because pain and suffering always question the Christian as they do the Buddhist, the Moslem and the Shinto. So today we say "All the world concerns us, particularly those places and situations where people suffer and die because of war."

The path of this mobilization passes Mount Hiei. This tenth anniversary is an occasion of joy for us who participate and a source of encouragement for all who seek peace in the world. But our path does not and end here and our commitment must continue with ever-increasing intensity. We hope therefore that there will be more meetings on Mount Hiei next year and in future years as there will also be a meeting of the S. Egidio community in October at Padua and Venice in Italy to which all here present are invited.

No Weapons on Earth!



The Ven. Tep Vong
President of the Cambodian Buddhist Association

It is of a great significance to me to have been invited to the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei and have an opportunity to participate in today's deliberations. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to those who planned and prepared for this conference.

Japan has experienced no war after World War II. We can see the benefit of having no war in the prosperity Japan enjoys today, which is the evidence of the beliefs in and willingness to protect Buddhism by all the Japanese of different ages across generations. Unfortunately, however, in Cambodia civil wars have been continuous over 30 years. As some of you may know, only during the last month there were exchange of gun fires killing and wounding more than 500 people. I painfully feel the different realities between the two nations, both of which are Buddhist countries.

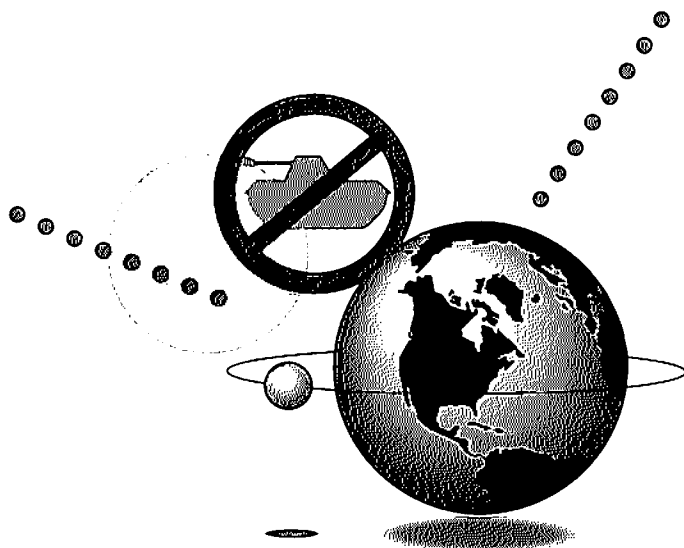
It is impossible to think about a peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts without talking about Buddhism. Why? It is because Buddhism denies violence. Violence solves nothing. Every man and woman of religion must acquire an impartial and just way of viewing and thinking about things through always walking a neutral, middle and fair way. If each one of us changes for the better, then, the world will evolve in the right direction. If we fail to do so, man's desires, sinful deeds and anger will emerge to unsettle the society.

In order for us to engage ourselves in a concrete movement of peace based on the teaching of Buddha, we have to practice a movement to ban the production, sale or purchase of weapons which kill people, destroy natural environments and cause wars.

Through involving ourselves to actively promote and continue this time and energy consuming movement people will believe more strongly the power of Buddha and eventually heart and mind of people will be satisfied and peace will be brought about.

In conclusion, I pray for the health and diligent work of all who share this activity for peace as well as a progress of the movement itself.

Thank you.



Forgiveness Leads to Reconciliation

Vinco Cardinal Puljić
Archbishop of Sarajevo



As a citizen of multireligious Bosnia and religious leader of the Catholic community within it, with joy and gratitude I join this Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace on Mt. Hiei as the fountain of the Japanese culture and the birth place of Buddhism in Japan.

Having in mind the time limit I was given as well as my ethnic and religious identity, I would like to share with you my experience of present tensions in Bosnia and remind all of us of some statements of Pope John Paul II on religious peace keeping and peace making from Assisi 1986 to Sarajevo 1997.

War for ethnic territories in Bosnia, not a war of religions

Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) is a small country with only 51.129 square kilometers. According to the last census of April 1991 it had 4,340,000 inhabitants. Due to its geographical position and its turbulent history, ethnic and religious identity of its inhabitants coincide since centuries: 43% Bosnians-Muslims, 31% Serbs-Orthodox, 17% Croats-Catholics. We citizens and believers of two political entities in after-Dayton BH do differ in evaluating the causes and consequences of the cruel war which started in November 1991 and finished in December 1995. This war broke off after disintegration of Yugoslavia and recognition of the new states of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia. On the First of March, 1992 we citizens of BH were asked at a legally organized referendum do we want to stay in a curtailed Yugoslavia or vote for independence of our country. Serbian leaders in Bosnia did not allow any voting in the localities with Serb ethnic majority where they controlled municipalities and police forces. Despite this prohibition to vote, 63% of voters took part in referendum and 62% of them gave their voices for an independent BH. From then on, Serbian local militias, helped by regular units of Yugoslav army, began systematically to take by force territory which in their opinion was Serbian ethnic realm. From November 1991 to December 1995 they took 72% of country's territory, but due to Dayton peace accords they were allowed to keep 49%.

This is not a good time nor opportunity to bombard my audience with the numbers of killed civilians, destroyed mosques and churches, raped women, missing persons, exiled families and individuals who were ethnically "cleansed" from their homes and their localities. Foreign journalists in their reports and articles were able to show some elements of religious traditions in this war for ethnic territories by pointing at individual local leaders or crescent, Muslim green caps, Catholic rosaries etc. We religious leaders met several times during the war and gave statements that it was not a war of religions and that any crime committed on behalf of one's religion is a crime against religion. On June 9, 1997 we signed a Statement on shared moral commitment. In it we acknowledged that "our religious and spiritual traditions (=Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish) hold many values in common, and that these shared values can provide an authentic basis for mutual esteem, cooperation and free common living in BH". In mutual recognition of our religious differences we condemned all violence against innocent persons, any form of abuse or violation of fundamental human rights. We encouraged our respective believers to treat others as we would like them to treat us.

We established in June this year a four members Organizing Committee for Interreligious Council of BH which will be an advisory body of four traditional religious communities for collaboration of religious leaders in our country. Now we are facing the challenge of making such standing rules and secretariats of this body so that it many not be dominated by one of the partners or manipulated by political parties.

Our religions enable us to forgive and to reconcile

Christian Sacred Scriptures look at peace among nations as integral part of peace with God. Such a peace is always linked to justice: "Justice will bring about peace; right will produce calm and security. My people will live in peaceful country, in secure dwelling and quiet resting places" (Is 32;17-18). Saint Paul urged his fellow Christians who were absolute minority in gigantic Roman empire: "If possible, on your part, live at peace with all" (Rom 12;18). We Catholics have teaching authority of popes, ecumenical

councils and bishops. An important evolution but not revolution took place at Vatican II (1962-1965) in our doctrine on religious liberty, relation of the Church to non-Christian religions and pluralism in the modern world. This ecumenical council in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), chapter five, speaks of "Fostering of peace and establishment of a community of nations" (77-90).

A turning point in Catholic support for interreligious peace movement was the World Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace in Assisi on October 27, 1986. Pope John Paul II at his meeting with representatives of Christian communities on that occasion said: "The Church is herself called to be the effective sign and means of reconciliation and peace for human family". In his speech to representatives of various religions of the world at the concluding ceremony he said: "With the world religions we share a common respect for and obedience to conscience, which teaches us to seek the truth, to love and serve all individuals and peoples, and therefore to make peace among individuals and among nations." He invited all participants to witness before the world, each according to his own conviction, to the transcendent quality of peace. In the same speech he pointed out that "humanity has entered an era of increased solidarity and hunger for social justice." Two days later John Paul II thanked in Rome non-Christian participants of the Assisi gathering for their participation emphasizing: "We went on pilgrimage to Assisi because we all were convinced that the various religions can and should contribute to peace."

On October 5, John Paul II visited United Nations in New York on occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of this organ and instrument of collaboration of world nations. In his address to the General Assembly he spoke of the rights of nations to self-determination. Within this context he brought out the powerful re-emergence of certain ethnic and cultural consciousness against the horizon of universality in the family of humankind: "This tension between the particular and the universal can be considered immanent in human beings. By virtue of sharing in the same human nature, people automatically feel that they are members of one great family, as is in fact the case. But as a result of the concrete historical condition of this same nature, they are necessarily bound in a more intense way to particular human groups, beginning with the family and going on to various groups to which they belong and up to the whole of their ethnic and cultural group." In this same address the Pope called for a better respect of ethnic and cultural differences of individual nations, mentioning ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Central Africa: "Amplified by historic grievances and exacerbated by the manipulations of the unscrupulous, the fear of 'difference' can lead to a denial of the very humanity of 'the other': with the result that people fall into a cycle of violence in which no one is spared, not even the children. We are all very familiar today with such situations; at this moment my heart and prayers turn in a special way to the sufferings of the sorely tried peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

No wonder that His Holiness Pope John Paul II so much insisted on visiting Sarajevo during its siege in order to share with the inhabitants of our multiethnic and multireligious capital their distress, their fear and their un-safeness. But he was unable to do it only on April 12 and 13, 1997. In all his speeches in Sarajevo he insisted on mutual forgiving and asking forgiveness. In his Address to the members of the collective Presidency of BH he said: "The tensions which can develop between individuals and ethnic groups an inheritance from the past and a consequence of close proximity and diversity ought to find in religious values reasons for moderation and restraint, indeed for understanding, with a view to constructive co-operation...It is this interior attitude which must be fostered, both within the frontiers of BH and also in relations with neighboring States and the community of nations. For the edifice of peace

to be solid, against the background of so much blood and hatred, it will have to be built on the courage of forgiveness. People must know how to ask for forgiveness and to forgive!"

Many Muslim believers and theologians in BH do not like the word "reconciliation" because it might include forgetting the innocent civilians who were killed, raped women, destroyed mosques, displaced and missing persons, or even not prosecuting the war criminals. They say: reconciliation will come when international community makes a safe return of refugees possible or when we see the war criminals in jail. Maybe this is why John Paul II in his speech to Muslim representatives of BH said: "The time has come to resume a sincere dialogue of brotherhood, accepting and offering forgiveness: the time has come to overcome the hatred and vengeance which still hinder the re-establishment of genuine peace in BH. God is merciful—this is the affirmation that all believers in Islam love and share. Precisely because God is merciful and wills mercy, each individual must situate himself within the logic of love, so as to reach the goal of true mutual forgiveness."

Enriched by tragic experience of ethnic tensions in my country and deeply rooted in my Christian faith, I do believe that our religions enable us to forgive and reconcile.

Developing a New Religious Map for the Future

The Rev. Fr. Thomas Michel, S.J.
Jesuit Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue



As we meet here on Mt. Hiei, two facts of humankind's religious life attract our attention. First, all the world's major religions find their roots in Asia: those of West Asian matrix—Judaism, Parsi, Christianity, Islam; those of South Asian roots—Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism; those of East Asian origin—Taoism, Shinto, shamanism and traditional religions. The second fact of importance is that all these religions have transcended their places of origin and have taken root in a variety of new geographical locations and cultural settings.

Today we find Sikhs in Canada, Parsis in India, Jews in America and China, Buddhists in Europe and Africa, Hindus in Australia and Fiji, and Muslims and Christians throughout Asia, Africa, North and South America. Followers of the traditional religions of Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americas are discovering among themselves common concepts of the Divine, common values, and common ways of worship and organizing society. The religious map of the world is more complex than at any previous time in human history.

The religious situation of today's world is further complicated by the active presence of new forms of ancient religions, revival movements, and modern rethinkings of time-honored forms of religiosity. Although sometimes suspected of being unorthodox and their relationship to traditional forms of religious practice often difficult to define, the new religious movements are themselves a sign of the vitality of the religious quest in modern times and of the need of modern people to find satisfying and appropriate ways of pursuing one's religious path.

Religion and Culture

All this points up the importance of examining the relationship between religious faith and culture. In previous centuries, it was often assumed that religions were tied to cultural forms and practices and specific ways of viewing the universe and human relations. They were seen as important elements in identifying ethnic and national identities. However, at a recent meeting of Asian Christian theologians, I heard much concern expressed for the need to discover how to live one's Christian faith as an Asian believer. Christianity might have arrived in Asia in the past from Europe, but modern Asian Christians are not content to follow European forms and traditions. They are Christians but they are not Americans or Italians; they are Koreans and Indonesians and Thais who are Christians and want to express their faith in ways in which they feel culturally 'at home'. These theologians spoke of "hybridization," much as botanists might create from ancient strains a new type of orchid or apricot

more adaptable to new environments.

What I find interesting is the fact that three years ago in separate meetings with young Muslims in Europe—in the Netherlands and in Scotland—I heard the same kinds of concerns expressed. These young people, whose ancestors had immigrated from Turkey or Pakistan, aspire to bring together two basic considerations: they are Muslims and they are Europeans. How can they live their Islamic faith in ways that are faithful to the teachings of Islam and yet find a proper place in European cultures. The Dutch Muslims coined the term "intercreation." They do not want "assimilation," thus losing their identity. They do not want "opposition" or "apartheid," which would isolate them in Muslim ghettos. They want to create something new that is neither Turkish nor Dutch nor German, but rather a new way of being European Muslims. The Muslims in Glasgow expressed the same concern in other words: "We are not Pakistanis; we know nothing about Pakistan. We are Scottish and we want to build a Scottish Islam."

The coincidence of concerns of very different groups of believers in widely separated parts of the world points up the need today to distinguish between religious beliefs and cultural norms. It is no longer sufficient, when speaking of East-West Religious Dialogue, to identify some religions with "the East" and other with "the West." Over 50% of the Christians in the world today live outside Europe and North America. Almost two-thirds of the Muslims live not in the Middle East but in South and Southeast Asia. The fastest growing religion in Europe, according to some reports, is Buddhism. At a Buddhist monastery in Taiwan last year, I met Buddhist novices from Congo and South Africa, as well as from Canada and France.

Facing new realities

If what we are interested in is mutual understanding, the first thing we must do is to put aside the old stereotypes and face new realities. The most basic element of modern religiosity is that people of East and West are engaged in a search to find appropriate ways to live their personal religious commitments in modern societies. This is often not easy. Economic conditions, political life, new forms of family life and gender relations, and the speed of communications and new forms of global media all impinge on traditional ways of practicing one's religion. All these can raise ethical questions which must be faced by believers. Neither Dolly the Cloned Sheep nor the Internet nor McDonalds can be ignored by Hindus, Buddhist, Muslims, nor followers of traditional religions, because all bear unavoidable implications in their lives.

In short, like it or not, we are all in the same boat. As religious believers, we all have a vision of what life should be like in the present as well as a vision of the kind of world we want to build for our children and grandchildren. East-West religious dialogue must begin from these common concerns and work from there towards mutual understanding. History can be an effective teacher and those who ignore its lessons are condemned to repeat its mistakes. But the focus of religious dialogue must not be on digging up the past and hurling it at one another as accusations and denunciations. Our focus must be on our lives as religious believers in the present and the task of building a more just, peaceful, dignified, and fraternal future.

Peace: the Basis of Islam



Dr. Abdullah bin Saleh Al-Obaid
Secretary General of the Muslim World League

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah(God), the Sovereign, the Most Holy,
Peace and Benediction be upon Prophet Muhammad, messenger of peace and our Master, upon his
kinfolk and companions all.

I am very glad to take part in the events of the tenth anniversary of the Religious Summit meeting which
is being organized this year by the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives and to make a
contribution through a speech on mutual understanding and religious dialogue between the East and
the West with emphasis on Religion and Peace.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to have this good opportunity to discuss with you the subject of Religion
and Peace in the World, which is a matter of concern, both in the East and the West in general, and
which preoccupies the minds of the followers of divine religions in particular.

In fact, regardless of the background of advocating the need for establishing world peace or the reasons
that necessitate it, we, the Muslim World League—which represents the voices of more than 1.2 billion
Muslims, who make up the Muslim community, the community of peace—are much more concerned
with making Islam's position clear with regard to peace and to stress the fact that human outcry for
peace is not—as far as the Muslim community is concerned—a recent quest. The Holy Qur'an says,
"But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do also incline towards peace, and trust in Allah."

Also, it is narrated in Hadith (the tradition of the Prophet) that

"Allah is Peace."

Moreover, a popular prayer among Muslims begins like this,

"O'Lord, thou art peace, and from thee cometh peace."

Even as is well known, the usual form of greetings among Muslims, any time, anywhere, is

"Assalam Alaikum (peace be upon you)."

Islam is a divine religion, a revealed law, and an upright path, which is not the product of human
thought. Rather, as a religion of the innate character, according to which Allah has created mankind,
Islam is valid for all times and places. It is in the wisdom of Allah, that the revelation of Muhammed
should be the ultimate revelation which will abrogate all the preceding divine religions and determine
the basis upon which they are dealt with. There is neither a revelation nor a Prophet after Islam and the
Prophet of Islam. Islam was revealed to perfect all the divine religions, in the same manner as the
revelation of Muhammed, peace upon him, perfected all divine revelation.

Allah said in this regard ;

"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam

as your religion."

For this reason, Allah has taken it upon Himself to guard the Holy Qur'an against any destruction, amendments, replacements and distortion.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an,

"We have, without doubt, sent down the message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

Let me now dwell on the basic tenets of Islam by putting this question.

What is Islam ?

Islam is manifested by, first, pronouncing the two testimonies, namely, that there is no deity worthy of worshipping except Allah, and that Muhammed is His Messenger, and then believing in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, predestination regarding good and evil, resurrection after death, observing the five daily prayers, offering the poor their due, fasting during the month of Ramadan, undertaking the pilgrimage to Allah's Sacred House by those who can afford to do so, and treating people kindly in all temporal matters, in accordance with the dictates of the laws of Islam.

Moreover, peace has a firm relation with the nature of Islam, because the basic concept of Islam is that we should live peacefully and safely with each other ensuring coexistence in harmony, and far from dispute, war, acts of violence, terrorism enslavement and colonialism, regardless of different religions, countries and nationalities.

Furthermore, Islam does not condone wars that are waged among men, because of ethnic affiliations, for all men belong to a single origin and a single soul. They have been made into various peoples and tribes, so that they may know one another in accordance with Allah's saying,

"Ye mankind, We have created you from a single pair of male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes, that ye may know one another verily the best amongst you in the sight of Allah, is he who is most pious."

Of course, the most pious is the most committed to the path of Allah.

The introduction of Allah's commandments depends on calling to the path of Allah, with wisdom and good exhortation. For a long time during the early days of Islam in Makkah, Prophet Muhammed, peace upon him, continued to call to the path of Allah through wisdom, good exhortation and arguing with the inhabitants of Makkah in the best possible manner. Muslims in Makkah were subjected to enormous harm, and whenever they asked the Prophet, peace upon him, to allow them to use their swords in self defense, he would say,

"I have not been ordered to fight — I have not been ordered to fight."

But, as the extent and degree of harm escalated, Muslims were permitted to fight through Allah's saying in the Holy Qur'an,

"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily Allah is the most powerful for their aid."

A wronged person has the right to repel the injustice done to him in a similar way, and it is only because of this that Islam establishes the legality of the repulsion of injustice and aggression, in defense of freedom of religion and creed in conformity with Allah's saying,

"If then anyone transgresses the prohibition against transgress ye likewise against him, but fear Allah."

The true religion of Islam is unreservedly against all acts of terrorism, wrong-doing and corruption in the land. Therefore, the on-going attempts by the west to label the entire community of Islam with inappropriate descriptions such as "terrorists" and "extremists" etc. are but clear indication that certain elements in the west lack deep perception of the reality of Islam because all the information they have about Islam, is derived from sources and reference books that aim purposely at discrediting Islam, and defiling its image.

As for the politically motivated acts of terrorism in certain Islamic and non-Islamic countries, these are only the consequences of the actions of the other party, inspired by extremism, and resulting in humiliation, injustice and despotism directed against the former.

Therefore, it is for the aggressor to cease all attempts aimed at dominating the people of the Muslim world, and to stop ignoring the legitimate demands by Muslims for a fair deal.

Alas, from this pulpit, which has brought together an assortment of religious representatives with the aim of urging mankind to establish peace, and as a religious as well as humanitarian obligation, I feel duty bound to add my voice to the voices of all peace-loving peoples in the world, in demanding respect of the rights of the other party—Muslims and non-Muslims alike, for these are rights that have been given to them by Allah, renunciation of wrong-doing, racial discrimination and the use of peaceful methods to demand legitimate rights.

Let us always remember that we are all brothers in humanity which Allah has dignified when He said in the Holy Qur'an,

" We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation."

I beseech Allah to guide us all to the path of the truth and the path of peace, for He is the Peace and from Him comes peace and to Him shall peace return. He is all hearing, near and ready to answer prayers.



For Deeper Understanding between Christians and Muslims



Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim
Metropolitan of Aleppo
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch

Ever since the fifties the call for dialogue between Christians and Muslims has been raised. The call was first to come from some Western churches in North America and Europe. Prior to that, dialogue between these two religions in particular, and with Judaism which exists in reality in the Middle East, had been proceeding on another smooth course. The aim of the believers in these heavenly religions in the Middle East at that time had not been limited to papers and meetings but had been concerned with the daily dialogue of real life and common work. Historical knowledge and experience have been very helpful in engendering a spirit of brotherhood and love among believers.

The reason behind the absence of a serious relation between Christianity and Islam in the past was due to the deep apprehension of the possibility of evangelizing attempts, or dominance, or imposition of thoughts on others which were, sometimes, implemented by means of wars. However, today, there is a sort of agreement in the East that what unites heavenly religions far exceeds what separates them. Therefore this call is aimed at having a dialogue among believers and not among religions, because the differences of exegesis and interpretations of religions have been behind all those feelings of alienation and estrangements among the faithful. Yet, the essence remains one because God is one and unique.

Middle Eastern countries have gone through hard circumstances ever since the forties. And some Middle Eastern countries are still under the presence of similar conditions. As a result of that, Muslims and Arabs as well have been very skeptical about religious dialogues between the East and the West. Therefore, the first claim is to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on brotherly relations among heavenly religions. And the second is to have mutual understanding when Muslims as Easterners have a dialogue with Christians in the West.

The term "dialogue" here does not necessarily mean giving up one's beliefs or identity; neither does it mean that economic and political aims be the important issue in the religious dialogue between the East and the West.

The wealth of the East lies in the ancient civilizations which prospered and flourished in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia and Syria. These ancient eras have been a basic foundation for dialogue calling for openness of one towards the other. There is no terrorism in the East as depicted by Western mass media and no domination of the West as we figure it. There is no ignorance in the West as reported by some. If our aim in this dialogue is to live as human brethren, it will be in harmony with the aim of religions which stress that man was created in the image of God and there is no difference which shall always be the criteria.

This meeting in which representatives of religions of the world have gathered together in prayer for

This is a different type of dialogue; as all enter into a dialogue with God on the one hand and with each other at the same time. It is only on such solid foundations of mutual brotherly relationships that the East and the West will be able to meet in order that Man's thoughts be freed from disasters, calamities and dilapidation in both East and West.

Historically speaking, starting with the Mongols' invasion of the region, followed by the Ottoman occupation, and ending with the Western mandate, there has been no Christian-Muslim conflict in a wide sense. But there were, rather, decisions taken by influential people in specific geographical areas for a duration that lasted no more than a few months, whereas history is full of chapters depicting unity and cooperation and benefiting from the expertise of Christians throughout the region in the different eras.

My view is that the experience of Easterners has to be the entry to any possible cooperation between the East and the West. Islam is spreading today in most parts of the world, and the West has to admit to the influence of Islam, depending on distorting the image of Islam or ignoring its role, or abstaining from benefiting from its experience.

Christianity is first and foremost a religion of Love. Jesus Christ based Christianity on equality and indiscrimination. The Apostle Paul says: "And we know that all things work together for good to them who are called according to this purpose." (Romans 8:28)

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." (Romans 10:12)



St. Paul also says:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

It's only when Islam comprehends Christianity as such: that all thoughts calling for divisions, disparity, alienation and separation between Christianity and Islam on the one hand; and Judaism on the other in the East, shall fall apart and be null and void.

Only with such an image shall cooperation between the Eastern and Western sides be resumed.

Opening Ourselves to the Wisdom of Other Religions



Chief Rabbi Prof. David Rosen

Director of Interfaith Relations, Anti-Defamation League, Israel

Religion seeks to give a sense of meaning and direction to human existence, providing us with understanding of who and what we are. Accordingly it is inextricably bound up with the different components of our human identity: as individuals, spouses, members of families, communities, nations, etc.

These are the expanding circles of our human identity, each of which has its place and value. We ignore these different elements of our make-up at our peril. Indeed, sociological analysis indicates that much of the problems of alienation and disorientation within modern society are the result of loss of traditional components of human identity.

These circles of human identity should spiral outwards from the smaller spheres such as family, through the larger, such as community and nation: to ultimately embrace the widest circles uniting all people in universal human solidarity. However when these smaller spheres perceive themselves as threatened, physically or psychologically, the opposite happens. They do not open out towards wider circles of human identity, but close themselves off from others, isolating themselves in order to protect the component of identity that is perceived as threatened. Under such circumstances, religion all too often become part and parcel of that insularity, even nurturing and exacerbating it.

In order to free communities from their fears and suspicions that isolate them from others, we have not only to address their physical security, but also to counteract the misrepresentations, the bigotry and stereotypes that make up the barriers of suspicion and hostility that alienate one community from another. Because religion is so profoundly bound up with all aspects of human identity, interreligious understanding is crucial to this process of breaking down prejudicial barriers and for generating mutual respect and trust. When we can discover the humanity of the other and his or her identity, then we can

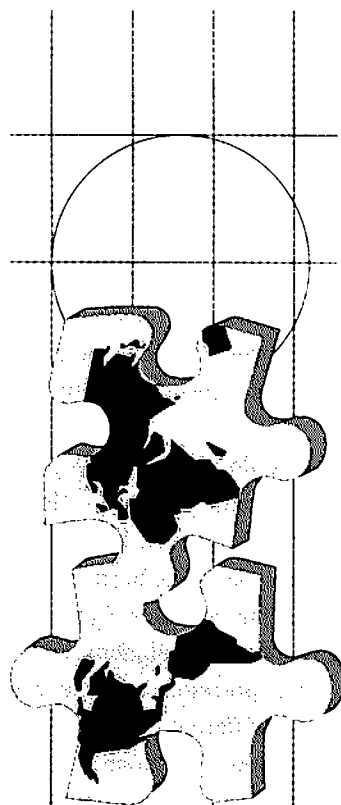
discover our human solidarity with one another and prevent misunderstanding, suspicion, fear and alienation, that lead to conflict.

While stereotypes and prejudice tend to be most severe in relation to those who are perceived to pose an immediate threat, nevertheless the further away communities are from each other, the greater the likelihood of ignorance and misrepresentation. Such is invariably the case between what are called the West and the East. As our world becomes increasingly smaller and as we become more and more interdependent upon one another to ensure a sustainable eco-system for our common future, the need to comprehend and respect one another becomes all the more acute. Because, as mentioned, religion is central to our communities' identities and ethos, East-West interreligious understanding is central to this imperative.

For effective engagement in this field, we are in need of what might be called theological humility. All of our Traditions emerge out of specific cultural contexts. None of them can encompass the whole spectrum of human experience and wisdom. Moreover, it should be self-evident to us that Truth, Reality, the Divine Presence, or whatever term we use for such, is greater than any one tradition—indeed, than all our traditions put together. Accordingly, we need to be open to the others' spiritual and moral insights and not be afraid to recognize the wisdom in another tradition— and to learn from it. Indeed such spiritual edification should be seen as a religious imperative itself.

I am reminded here of the wise advice of a great theologian and man of dialogue—the Swedish Lutheran Bishop Krister Stendahl, formerly of Harvard University. Stendahl recommends that we follow three ground rules for interreligious dialogue. First, always view the other community according to the best within it. Second, strive to understand others as they understand themselves. And finally, leave room for holy envy. It is no act of disloyalty to one's own tradition, to be able to see something of special beauty and insight in another.

East-West interreligious dialogue must focus on the discovery of the beauty and wisdom of the different traditions in the East and West. Accordingly, programmatic activity whether through meetings or publications, must enlighten our own communities with insights from other traditions, on the subjects and issues of importance to our well-being and sustainable future. Then, we will be better able to perceive the reality that we are all limbs of one body: all valuable and important contributors to our collective wisdom that must be drawn upon for the good of humankind and for our planet as a whole.



Theme ③ Contribution to Humanity and the Solidarity of Religion

As a Vessel of Peace



The Rev. Paul Shindo Oe
Minister of St. John's Church of Kyoto
Anglican Church of Japan

There are many religions on earth, as there are many rivers. Although the origin of a river is a small spring, it gathers many branch streams and other rivers and becomes one large river. On the contrary, however, religions of the world originated as simple springs, but further divided into many branches as history went on. Major religions appeared between 1,000 BC and 500 AD, named the "Axial Period" by the German philosopher Karl Jaspers. Founders and philosophers of religions discovered their selves through re-grasping myths and the classics from within the depth of human existence. They faced the entire world internally, and achieved emancipation and salvation. Great religious truths that were found in this way, were shown as lighthouses for the human voyage. Organized religions, however, separated and diversified from their origins. Historically, religions rarely created opportunities to promote interreligious solidarity.

The 20th Century is characterized by the disintegration of a large political union, which had enjoyed a period of hegemony. There was also the downfall of imperialism, where former colonies sought independence as sovereign states, while still searching for interdependent harmony and integration between peoples. Humankind around the world must overcome all the barriers to unity and seek for peace. This work, however, should not be left for politicians only. Instead, people of religion around the world must first reconcile, cooperate, and establish solidarity with each other.

What do we do to become well acquainted with others? First, we may gather information to analyze, and make judgments on it. However, the best way to truly understand others is to speak to them. Misunderstandings can be recognized through dialogue. Further time spent associating with others naturally dissolves the border that separated "them" from oneself. I believe the same reasoning can be applied to interreligious dialogue. For example, religionists should strive to study the history and teachings of other religions with a sense of humility. This becomes especially important when the symbolic expression and the religious language articulating one belief system or the "Ultimate Concern" is different between religions. Interreligious dialogue will be furthered by learning about the experts of other religions, and the life and practice of its believers. This facilitation can also be enhanced by active involvement with these people.

I am happy to see people of different religions gathered here today to commemorate two important milestones in interreligious communication: the 1986 interreligious dialogue held in Assisi of St. Francis,

and the Conference on Mt. Hiei which was held exactly ten years ago.

Historically, issues faced by people of religion often arose from their involvement with the state or secular politics. In Japan, for example, people of religion were made to serve politicians. In modern times, religions unfit for national policies were oppressed. Religious values were constantly subjugated to political values. After the 1867 Meiji Restoration up until the end of the World War II, the Japanese people were given some conditional freedom under the Meiji Constitution. However, religions were under stringent state control and people of religion were completely subjugated to the policies of the state. Even during the pre-Meiji period, Japanese religions were completely under the control of secular governments. In this political environment, Buddhists of Nichiren-Fujufuse Sect and Catholics endured government oppression. Before 1945, Japanese militarism oppressed other Asian countries, and severely persecuted the Oomoto Sect of Shinto. This is an opportune time also to recall the priests and believers of the Jodo-Shin Sect of Buddhism which, throughout history, created solidarity with and protected groups which were discriminated against.

Religious freedom was guaranteed in Japan after the end of the World War II. Consequently, the advances in interreligious dialogue reflected this change of world situation. I heard that recently, young Zen Buddhist priests and believers joined in the work of Mother Teresa to offer their voluntary services. When the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck Japan in 1995, many people voluntarily worked to help victims of the disaster. This spirit of mutual support helped the Japanese people to experience the joy of loving and helping one another. In human history, we can see examples of deep influences on world politics and cultures inspired by religious values. However, we can also cite examples of foolish and shameful behaviors where religions facilitated the suppression of ethnic groups through the practice of religious wars. It is a fact that some Japanese religions once played the role of ideologue for those in power, and helped suppress other religions. Furthermore, the historical course of Japanese religions after Meiji must be critically reviewed and verified from our contemporary standpoint. Japan's rapid modernization forced people of religion to assume the roles of educators and social workers. Ironically, when social welfare gave way to war preparations, people of religion who had carried the burden of social welfare were persecuted. In the past, people of religion in Japan permitted military invasion of Asian nations and failed to recognize the pains of Asian people. Religionists of that time failed to have self-awareness and just recognition to stop the war.

One people's sorrow should be the sorrow of all of humanity. One people's stability and peace should be the joy of the entire human race. Tragedies in the spiritual domain of humankind take place, however, when political values are given supremacy and religious values are neglected. Modern Japanese governments gave priority to the state over the happiness of its people. Therefore, social work has been placed on the shoulders of people of religion. Even Christians who were written off as foreign religionists recognized their devotions in education and social work. They accepted this task as the "vessel of the nation state," and voluntarily obeyed the state's policies. Thus, the nation state weighed heavily in their belief and conscience. Religious people's responsibility to humanity is to recall universal values that transcend the power of state and ethnic egoism. When faithful to each religious tradition, those universal values should be the inevitable derivative of each teaching.

People of religion should strive in their local communities to be universalistic and develop into a "vessel of society" or a "vessel for peace of mankind." Accordingly, they should beware of becoming a "vessel

of the state" or a "vessel of an ethnic group." Interreligious cohesion can produce the power to make this possible.

In 1987, The Anglican Church of Japan, a Protestant group, swore to be a "vessel for peace" as their motto at their 100th Anniversary. This expression was also used in a prayer by St. Francis of Assisi. Religion should exist for the salvation of others and for the peace of humankind. These universal purposes should be given a higher priority than the promotion of one's own religion or sect. One should feel fortunate, if one's own religion or religious sect disappears in the service for peace of humankind. Now is the time for all the people of religion in the world to pray for world peace, and unite themselves for solidarity.

India: the Great Crucible of Religions



Maj. Gen. S.S. Uban (Retd.)

Founder President of The Vanguard for Peace Foundation

PRESENT STAGE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

Humanity has had to pass through some of the most painful periods of history before reaching the conclusion that the coming 21st century demands global thinking and cooperation among nations if they are to survive at all. Colonial wars of aggression resulted in World War I of 1914-18 and divided the world into the so-called advanced nations and the third world which still waited to be exploited. Still not satisfied with the loot, three dictatorial nations united to fight yet another war to share the spoils—World War II of 1940-45. This war in which torture and genocide were practiced on a vast scale resulted in grinding poverty, unemployment and mass movements of dispossessed people as refugees to various countries.

Since World War II, over 130 small wars were fought during the last 50 years throughout the world although a major war was avoided. Old wounds are still raw and humanity stands at the brink of total destruction.

ROLE OF SCIENCE

Science which was heralded as harbinger of unimaginable prosperity and therefore peace turned out to be the main instrument of war and unending competition and conflicts between nations. It produced unbridgeable disparities. The nuclear "haves" became the arbiters of the destiny of "have nots" and started competing in mutually assured destruction (mad) between themselves.

Science has entered the service of megalomaniacs who deployed their deadly weapons in such a threatening manner that a war could start by accident or misinformation. In any case, the warning time has become so short that it would be impossible to stop the holocaust after someone even inadvertently presses the button.

SITTING ON A VOLCANO WHICH MAY ERRUPT ANY TIME

There are over 60,000 atomic war-heads stocked by the erstwhile two super powers which means an equivalent of three tons of TNT for every man, woman and child on earth. There are chemical and biological weapons of immense destructive and demoralizing power besides the nuclear weapons. Developments in laser beams and star wars are indeed frightening.

A horrifying array of conventional weapons stand on permanent alert with NATO and WARSAW groups of countries. Approximately 22 million people around the world stand armed at all times in the so-called defense of their countries. One hundred million anti-personnel mines lie buried in 68 countries, maiming and killing innocent civilians daily throughout the world. Drug addiction and illicit sale of drugs to finance terrorism and fundamentalism have reached an all-time high.

We know that 30 children die every minute for want of food and vaccines. The military budget of the world for every minute is U.S. dollars is 1.3 million. Half a billion people throughout the world have severe malnutrition and millions subsist on diets that are far below their minimal needs. The cost of a nuclear submarine equals the annual education budget of 23 developing countries with 160 million school-age children. The World Health Organization's programme to eradicate Malaria in the world would cost 450 million dollars. This is less than half of what is spent every day for military purposes. The world population is expected to swell to six billion in the year 2,000 A.D. and soon afterwards will reach the staggering figure of eight billion souls. The earth is going to be over-crowded and hungry. The family, which forms the foundation stone of a civilized society, is going out of fashion and is being replaced by gay culture.

THE NEED FOR PEACE

It is quite evident from the foregoing that peace is the imperative need of the hour if humanity is to survive and not face total extinction. Peace is not merely the absence of war; it is basically a happy and creative condition of human consciousness. It has many dimensions—individual, social, national and international, but all of them are inter-linked and indivisible. Human quest for peace is as ancient as the innate quest for happiness and joy. War, fear of destruction and condition of insecurity and anxiety are the very antitheses of peace. Poverty, injustice, unemployment, refugee problems and over-population have to be remedied to give peace a chance.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION

All religions have laid stress on compassion, cooperation, sharing and caring. Non-violence has been the creed of all religions in history. Behind and beyond all the religions of the world, there is spirituality and the experience of the unmistakable oneness of existence. It is this experience of the oneness of the Supreme Power or God by seers, saints or prophets which is the basis of all religions and of universal morality. It is the blazing sign-post of man's transcendence to a higher and nobler level of consciousness. Global thinking must now lead to global planning and to one world federation of nations, which alone can eliminate war. The key words of human evolution are faith in God and love or sense of identity among humans so that we can march ahead from a life of the senses to the life of the spirit and create a harmonious and happy world.

INDIA, THE GREAT CRUCIBLE OF HISTORY

This land of Lord Rama, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, Guru Nanak, and Baba Sheikh Farid has always

been working for peace. We have more religions co-existing in this country than in any other nation in the world. In spite of the religious divide during partition, there are ninety million Muslims — the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia — still living in this country and enriching the soil of India with their spiritual thought. There are fifteen million Christians and we are proud of the fact that the first Syrian Christian Church was built on the shores of India. There are 20 million Sikhs with the spiritual philosophy which acts as a bridge between Hinduism and Islam. Hindus, who form the majority in India, are very accommodating and cooperative. There are Buddhists, Jains, Jews and Sufis, beside Bahais and Ahmadiyas. You would appreciate therefore the sense of pride we have in our "unity in diversity."

It is from this background that Mahatma Gandhi, the great apostle of peace, won the war of independence of India by a unique technique of non-violent, non-cooperation against the British—the then rulers. His spiritual successor, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, laid the foundations of a non-aligned movement which gave hope of peace to the weak and struggling humanity of the developing world. Mother Teresa — the Noble Laureate who has dedicated her life to the service of the poor of all religious denominations — is yet another example.

RECOMMENDATION

To heal the wounds of the past and bring about reconciliation, friendship and cooperation amongst countries with different faiths, reconciliation commissions of religions leaders should be established in different regions of the world to help forgive and forget the past and usher in a new era of love, friendship and peace in the 21st Century. These should be located in the non-nuclear zones of peace, such as Tokyo, Tibet, New Delhi and South Africa. Offices for these commissions should be opened with immediate effect since time is running out. These Commissions should function under the guidance of United Nations Organization.

Grassroots Interfaith Dialogue and the United Religions Initiative

The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California



I would like to bring personal greetings and prayerful support from The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury.

I would also like to extend special gratitude to the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives and Tendai Buddhists for the invitation to participate in this noble effort in such a sacred space as Mt. Hiei. Also, I would like to extend gratitude to the people of Oomoto. Before I was born, they were doing serious interfaith work in Japan. They have suffered more than I can imagine. And they have extended the warmest of welcomes to my wife Mary and me.

The remarks that I am about to make come from years of prayer, meditation, and moral struggle. My words represent my best effort at being faithful to a Divine intent for a peace that passes human understanding. Also my address to you today is not the official position of the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Anglican Church or the Episcopal Diocese of California. This is simply what I have been led to pursue.

"Interfaith Cooperation and World Peace" is a subject which already elicits laudable efforts. On the local level, interfaith cooperation is rapidly emerging in hospital ministries, jail ministries, and university campus ministries. Cities around the world are rapidly developing interfaith commissions. National and even multi-national interfaith coalitions are springing up. Everyone here is well aware of the superlative results of the international interfaith organizations. And initiatives such as the Crown Prince of Jordan's Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies are engaged in multiple on-going dialogues. All of these are individual efforts which provide an infrastructure of interfaith work throughout the world. All of this deserves to be acknowledged and genuinely celebrated.

Is there anything needed beyond what already exists in the inter-religious world ? That is a critical question. Should we be open to an expanding coordination and cooperation among religions for the sake of global good ? There is an Initiative arising, a United Religions Initiatives which seeks to answer this question and therefore to expand significantly the core of hospitality, dialogue, and action among religions.

Presently there is religious persecution throughout the world. There is religious hatred being taught to young children throughout the world. There is religious fighting throughout the world. Yet the religions have not collected themselves to combat these religious ills. The URI seeks to collect the world of religions in order to provide a global, spiritual hope. Presently there is an untapped solidarity among religions that, if discovered, could be an abundant resource for peacemaking and global community-building. If religions could move just one step beyond the ancient religious competitions and attempt a new dimension of religious cooperation, an enormous global hope would be forthcoming.

At interfaith conferences, speakers call for a comprehensive approach by religions, but no one suggests the pursuit of a global, comprehensive mechanism that would allow such an approach. Speeches are made about religions healing the wounds of the world, but no one speaks about, first, healing the wounds among religions or a mechanism to make that possible. The United Religions Initiative is an attempt to call together a worldwide effort among religions and spiritual traditions to create a mechanism, an organism, a United Religions.

What is unique about the approach of the United Religions Initiative ? First of all we have begun with young people. We believe that the younger generations have a global hope for religious cooperation that differs from the reality that now pervades the religious world. Second, we want to include modern spiritual movements such a spirituality and healing, spirituality and the environment, spirituality and business. So much energy and insight is coming from sources that are not traditionally religious but could assist the larger aims of religion. Third, we want to include the voices of women in the discussions of a global hope. So often women are not present in the leadership of religions. Fourth, we intend to do our primary work at the grassroots level. The genius of the URI will come from the grassroots rather than from the top of existing hierarchies. Obviously we will invite the leaders of the

major religions to the table, keep them informed at every step along the way, eagerly await their critique and then address it, and let them know that in the end the point of United Religions will be bring them to a safe table for permanent dialogue. But initially, these great religious leaders are not pursuing the creation of a United Religions. If it is ever established, it will only spring forth from the grassroots of religion and spiritual movements. Fifth, we want the URI to be funded by non-religious sources. So often money from religions comes with strings attached. We want to create a common meeting ground that is paid for by the ordinary people who have global hope for religions. Sixth, we want the organizational design to the United Religions Initiative to emerge from an open-ended evolution and with the widest possible input from the religious and spiritual world. The Case Western Reserve School of Management is assisting us in making sure that the organizational design is open and emerging. And seventh, we do not want to create a burdensome bureaucracy. With the technical possibilities available at the beginning of a new millennium, we can be in touch and in conversation without having most everyone located in a giant building complex.

What is Calendar for the URI ?

In 1996 we opened an office and hired an Executive Director and a staff.

In 1997 we developed a Board of Directors and began holding Regional Summits on three continents. Recently 200 people from around the world met at Stanford University in California to begin to lay the foundations of vision, mission, and values, as well as to begin the research and development around issues such as representation, governance, and structure.

In 1998 we will have Regional Summits in 12 sites around the world. And we will again meet at Stanford in June to work on the Charter. Also, we will develop an International Board of Advisors.

In 1999 we will have local URI efforts in 25 countries of the world and continue working of the Charter in June.

On December 31, 1999 we would like to call for a global religious cease-fire whereby, for 24 hours, no person of any religion will harm a person from another religion. Instead that day will be given to reflection on the damage done on behalf of a Divine Name or a religious cause. Acts of contribution will be encouraged as well as pledges for new religious cooperation.

On June 26, 2000 we will invite people of religions to join walks together through villages, towns, and cities, and at the end to sign the Charter.

In June 2001 the URI Initiative will cease to exist and the United Religions will be a reality.

In all of this, I intend to be a catalyst wherever possible, but I will continue to function as a bishop who serves a very complicated diocese. I and the URI are merely scaffolding upon which others can stand to create a United Religions. And when the United Religions is built, the scaffolding and I will go away while the new creation will have its life and be a global hope.

Again I thank you for the honor of being here and to share in this noble mission.

Unity of World Religions for Peace



The Ven. Song Wol-Ju
Chairman of the Korean Buddhist Association

Dear World Religious Leaders:

It is a great honor for me and for Buddhists in Korea that I have been invited to the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei: The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for Peace.

I am thrilled with a deep sense of joy to be able to join you here in this ancient capital of Kyoto to build fraternal ties and solidarity among religious people and exchange dialogue on the role of religion to contribute to the world peace and development of mankind.

Ten years ago we held the first "Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei." Since then this gathering has been known as one of the important conferences in the world where important issues of mankind and the responsibility of religion are discussed.

It is my duty to express the pleasure and support of Korean Buddhists concerning this gathering as we assume that this gathering is a result of the sense of historical and social mission of Japanese religious leaders as well as being the fruit of endless love of mankind by those leaders.

I would also like to express my respect to all religious leaders who share the sense of significance of this gathering and have decided to participate in it.

In the 20th Century mankind achieved an unprecedented abundance of materials through significant expansion of its productive capabilities. Development of science and advanced technologies reached a level which mankind had never imagined before and a level which is exceeding the limits of human capabilities. Scientific development in this degree has made major progress in the exploration of life outside the planet earth.

We have to note, however, that development of production capabilities and science and technologies with material abundance has not brought about positive blessings alone for mankind. Mankind experienced the two World Wars in this century by those who attempted to broaden the materials supply and market place. Countless numbers of local conflicts have also been occurring.

Many people died by the use of weapons of mass murder which burn an entire city to ashes in seconds. Severe competition exists to develop and possess such weaponry among nations. Ownership of nuclear weapons is on the rise as a symbol of national power which permits elimination of another state without bloodying the hands of the offender.

Despite the contribution of many conscientious people including those religious men and women who love and respect the dignity of life, such an arms race is being curtailed. And yet, it is far from complete

eradication.

Another serious damage the development of science and technologies created is the destruction of nature and ecology. Development results in global scale exploitation and depletion of natural resources. Careless and wasteful use of resources have polluted air and water to such an extent that we are now pessimistic about the very survival of mankind. On the one hand the number of species which become extinct is on the increase and yet new creatures are born to satisfy man's desire through gene manipulations. Even though artificially manipulated forms of life may contribute to lengthening human life expectancy, such acts may disturb the order of nature and may ultimately result in a crisis of life itself.

At the verge of this crisis we, the people of religion, need to do serious self-reflection. Now is the time for all the believers of religion to raise high the universal values which the world and mankind are looking for. Namely, we must preach sublation of conflicts and confrontations and instead practice of reconciliation and fraternity. Religion endeavors to realize mutual recognition of dignity among all beings, overcoming differences of tribal or ethnic groupings, social classes or castes, as well as ideals and ideologies.

Yet notwithstanding fine teachings of religion, religious conflict or confrontation is at times causing tribal wars or ethnic conflicts. Without presenting correct alternatives at the time of a crisis of mankind, religion sometimes increases instability through providing superstitious interpretations of the cause of the crisis.

A difference exists between Oriental and Occidental religions, in that Oriental religion intrinsically teaches the "ultimate." This teaching is a process to enlighten ourselves about the relationship between the world and the universe and the relationship among various forms of life. The way of life in which those who understood such relationships earlier become signposts for those who have not been enlightened yet is called "religion."

Buddhism, in particular, places emphasis on this process of enlightenment and tries to learn from every existence and phenomenon. It is an essence of Buddhism that teaches that man can enlighten himself even in a single leaf falling in the air.

From the perspective of Buddhism, this world in which we live and the universe is just like a huge water jar in which both are intricately intertwined and in which humans are merely one of the elements of the jar. If the jar is destroyed, no water can be stored again. By the same token, all beings are interdependent. Existence of numerous and minute planktons in the sea water produce and sustain other forms of life in nature of which the human being is one.

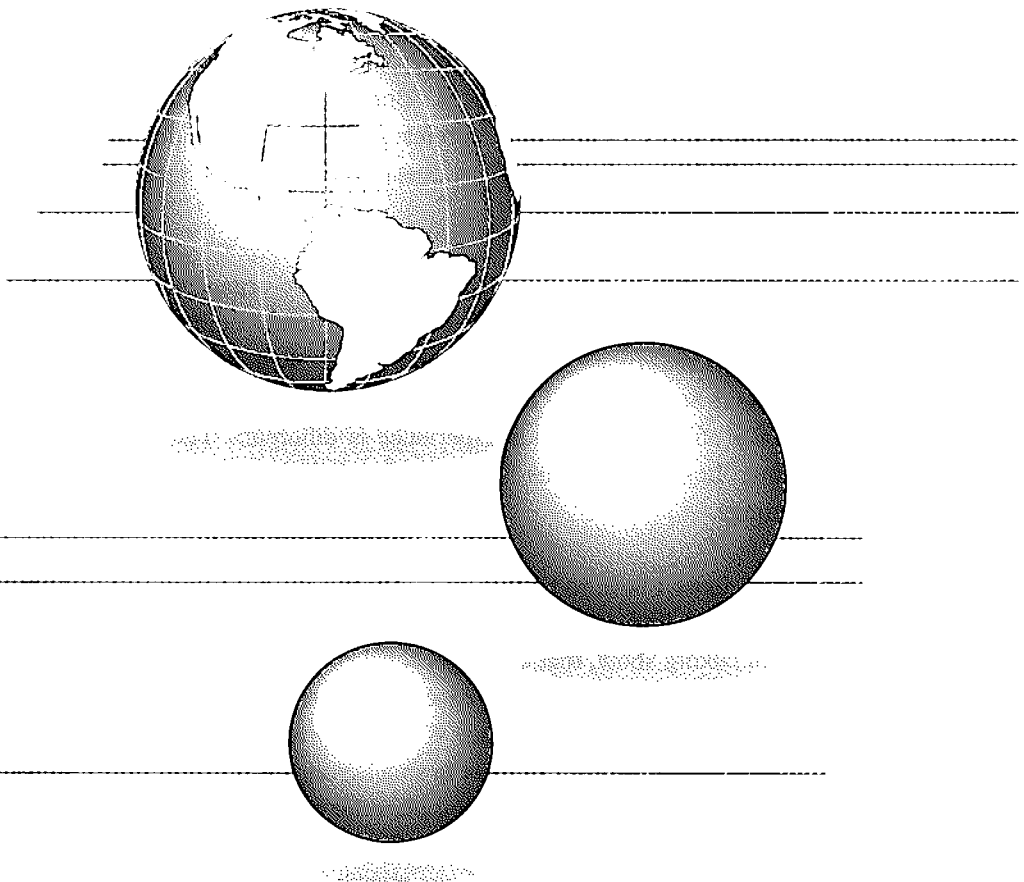
Undistorted understanding of the above mentioned state of things as they are shows the direction toward solidarity among the people of religion. If we recognize mutual acceptance and fraternity among various religions of the world to be the spirit of our unity, then, we must cooperate with each other to realize world peace, uphold universal human values, and eliminate the current crisis of life on earth due to the destruction of ecological systems.

Dear religious leaders from different countries in the world we must shape the 21st Century so that it becomes an era in which life is respected. It will not be like the 20th Century when the value of life was degraded to serve only as means, resulting in a negative materialistic civilization of man. It must be a time of spiritual civilization when we have a universal human value in reality and which recognizes all sentient beings as one life. This is the realization of "Oneness of Life Spirit."

The future of mankind will not be desperate if we, people of religion, can demonstrate a model of unity in order to realize "Oneness of Life Spirit." For this very reason our gathering at this time is a historical event of significance. Our fraternal relationship, perseverance toward solidarity, and ceaseless efforts will be rewarded by filling the future of the earth with serene and shiny opportunities.

By the cause of our gathering here and the merit thereof, let us join together for a prayer to accomplish what we are here for. Sincere appreciation goes to Japan Conference of Religious Representatives. I wish you development and prosperity.

Thank you.



4 The Development and Future Prospects of Religious Dialogue

Toward a Global Interfaith Network through Basic Personal Interchange

The Very Rev. James Parks Morton

President, the Interfaith Center of New York, the Temple of Understanding



Our job is to think of the future. The last section of this afternoon is focused on future prospects for inter-religious, interfaith dialogue, and how those are developed. And my point is that this development is really dependent on, to a very large degree, three different factors: first, the context in which it happens; second, the style—the sort of feeling in which it happens; and third, who is invited to come and share in the dialogue.

These three qualifications, I think, are absolutely crucial because so much interfaith dialogue in recent years has been—and I'm sorry to say I think this conference is another example of that—very official, very formal, and largely made up of middle aged men, professionals, religious officials and bureaucrats. None of these things are bad, in and of themselves. But I think when you put them all together, the interfaith dialogue becomes very formal in tone—professional, male, and middle-aged. One tends to see the very same people at all of these meetings. That doesn't mean they are bad, it just means that we see each other every time we come together.

Usually the context and the style of most interfaith meetings is so organized (over-organized) that any kind of really deep sharing between people of different backgrounds—different beliefs, different styles, different practices, different experience—is almost impossible. Reading speeches like I'm doing, in a very large session, prevents any sharing of feeling. There is actually no opportunity to respond, for you to tell me that I'm really off base, that your experience is different. That just doesn't occur in the structure of the meeting. In short, dialogue is not really invited and seemingly therefore not valued in these very formal meetings.

Now, having said that, it doesn't have to be that way. There have been very large interfaith meetings, which are very different in feeling, in style and in attendance. Therefore, I think the likes of us can learn. The meetings I'm talking about, that are large, consisting of both men and women, just is not the case here. Both young and old, that is not the case here. Both professional and indigenous and just ordinary men and women, that's not the case here. We are all professionals. What I'm talking about are large meetings structured so that people can meet in small groups and express their feelings. I offer as an example huge meetings which have been taking place for the last fifteen years at Taizé in France. They have perfected this technique. Their meetings in the summer total four or five thousand people—almost all young people. The structure of those large meetings is mostly small groups with occasional big sessions, but small groups in which genuine sharing takes place.

Now the history of interfaith dialogue over the past hundred years has consisted largely of two kinds of groups. Another point I want to make is that I think a third kind of interfaith dialogue session is truly needed.

Now, a brief history of the first meetings. These first meetings have been largely organized around a uniquely charismatic leader and the meeting is made up of his or her followers and friends from many different traditions and many different backgrounds.

Examples of these large meetings, organized around the followers of a charismatic leader, are the interfaith meetings of Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission in New Delhi. They go back to the grandfather and the father of the present leader, Rajinder Singh. Second, is the extraordinary impact of Sir Francis Younghusband in England in the 1930's starting the World Congress of Faiths. Third, going back thirty-five years to the extraordinary woman, Juliet Hollister, in America and her world-wide contacts that have made up the American Temple of Understanding. Fourth, this is very important for us to know here, is the amazing work of Abbot Hagami who has been the inspiration of so many interfaith excursions. I was honored to be part of his excursions to different religious centers and of course he is the inspiration because he was the Abbot of Mount Hiei and he presided there ten years ago, an incredible man. The followers of Onisaburo Deguchi and the continuing work of the Oomoto community for over seventy years have centered again around a charismatic leader. And I return to the community I mentioned earlier, the Taizé community in France around the person of its Prior Frey Roger Schutz is one of the spiritual interfaith centers of the world.

Now, secondly, a latter form of interfaith dialogue has been organized, of which this conference is an example. This is the kind of conference usually organized by religious or academic institutions. These are often very large conferences and congresses. And they have a great many different speakers, not just one charismatic individual but a large group of speakers from different traditions. That's the style here. Participants can pick from a menu of different options. This is the format very often for week long interfaith retreats and is very popular. It's also usually rather impersonal.

Now I talked about two different kinds of interfaith meetings. I think the first format, that is organized around a charismatic individual, will continue because a charismatic individual draws people. It's the name of the game. The format that we are experiencing here is efficient. It handles large groups of people and many different traditions can come. And I think it will continue.

I want to end by speaking of what I consider to be a third kind of interfaith meeting. This is organized around smaller groups of people from diverse religious backgrounds. What brings them together in their different religious traditions is a shared passion about a situation or a context. What are some of those contexts? They could be interfaith community projects in areas of special needs such as housing or job training or rebuilding after natural disasters, voter registration, and young children. Secondly, there could be projects that deal with individuals of very special needs, such as disabled people. And interfaith projects of many different traditions and groups dealing with disabled people or older people or single people or drug or alcohol dependent people, rehabilitation programs, released prisoners, persons living in institutions. A third type could be environmental restoration projects-going into a community that has been decimated by an environmental disaster. Fourth, recreation projects for children or for seniors or for teenagers. Fifth, cultural, artistic projects. I have had a lot of experience

with these, interfaith, but made up of musicians, artists, dancers and actors. And sixth, educational projects; projects working towards developing curriculum for children.

Now, the last thing I want to say is that my experience over really twenty-five years now has been that the way to get this third kind of meeting actually off the ground is through exchanges. Exchanges between individuals, exchanges between small groups of one tradition going to live and work in a community that is very different. This is what my friends at Oomoto and myself at the Cathedral since 1975 have been doing. We've had Christian, Shinto and Buddhist exchanges with people living together for two weeks to two months. My daughter lived in a Shinto community for five months. From the Cathedral over these last twenty-five years we've had fifty people living in other communities during the summer. And something like forty Oomoto people have lived for three months with us at the Cathedral. Living together fosters communication at a grass-roots level, where there can be genuine sharing. I think this makes deep interfaith understanding possible.

So I end with this: it is my hope that such exchanges and group interfaith projects can become the norm and not an exception in the future. There are many examples we have to follow: the Friends World Service, the Peace Corps, the Experiment in International Living. Various denominational religious organizations have tried these international service programs and the response has been absolutely excellent.

However, we are in a new situation and it's very positive, with the movement towards cities having interfaith centers like we are developing in New York and other cities all over the world. As Bishop Swing spoke of the United Religions being an internal network, it's going to be truly possible to have exchanges on a very very broad basis. And that should be the basis for future interfaith dialogue and understanding.

Thank You.

(transcribed from a recording of the actual speech)

Harmony through Religious Dialogue

Dr. Robert Traer
General Secretary
International Association for Religious Freedom



I want to thank the sponsors of this Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei for graciously inviting me to participate. And I want to express my gratitude to the many Japanese who support the International Association for Religious Freedom, especially to Rev. Yukitaka Yamamoto, the IARF president, and to the leaders and members of Ittoen, the Konko Church of Izu, Risho Kosei-kai, Shi-tennoji Temple, Tsubaki Grand Shrine, the Japan Free Religious Association, and the IARF Japan Chapter.

I have been invited to speak on the development and future prospects of religious dialogue and am happy to offer a modest contribution. I begin by inviting you to think of religious dialogue as the way we try to tune ourselves and our religious communities in order to create harmony within our culture. If there is harmony among the religious communities within our culture, then we may hope for dialogue and harmony among the cultures of the world. But if there is no harmony within our own culture, and no harmony within our own religious communities, and no harmony within ourselves, then there is no possibility of harmony within our world.

Therefore, the International Association for Religious Freedom seeks harmony in the world by supporting initiatives that promote mutual respect and religious freedom within countries and local communities. These initiatives vary according to the circumstances in each culture.

For instance, in Pakistan the IARF has sponsored public forums in which Muslim and Christian political leaders have supported the rights of religious minorities. At times government officials have refused permission for these meetings to be held, and in one city religious extremists physically attacked one of the forum organizers. Nonetheless, a public dialogue has been held in support of religious freedom and mutual respect for the different Pakistani religious communities. Muslims and Christians have affirmed the right of religious minorities, based on their understanding of the Koran and Bible, and Muslims and Christians have voiced support for the human rights recognized under international law including the right to freedom of religious belief.

A second example comes from an extremely different cultural context. In Korea last summer at the IARF Congress, Japanese and Korean members of the IARF entered into dialogue about the conflict between their two peoples in this century. For more than a year prior to the Congress, Japanese IARF leaders negotiated with Koreans planning the Congress in Korea in order to prepare two workshops. During these negotiations the Koreans requested that the Shinto priests in the IARF not wear their ritual clothing at the Congress or lead any Shinto devotions, as the Koreans do not distinguish between the Shrine Shinto practiced by Japanese IARF members and the State Shinto that was imposed by the Japanese government on Koreans during the Japanese occupation of the peninsula. IARF Shinto leaders voluntarily agreed to this request in order to contribute to the successful dialogue that took place at the Congress, which concluded with a service for peace at the Demilitarized Zone in Korea involving Rev. Yukitaka Yamamoto as well as Korean religious leaders and other international guests.

At third example concerns communities struggling to overcome the debilitating effects of poverty. In India the IARF has primarily pursued a community development strategy in support of religious tolerance and cooperation. Near Calcutta, for example, local Muslim women have been trained to be leaders of self-help community efforts to improve hygiene and sanitation in their villages and to develop small savings programs that will allow microcredit opportunities for investment. When these women were asked by the IARF organizer assisting them to consider how they might contribute to harmony among Muslims and Hindus in West Bengal, the women decided to celebrate Divali in song and dance in order to join in spirit with their Hindu neighbors. They abstained from the devotional acts of Divali, of course, as no Muslim would make an offering to a Hindu deity. But otherwise these women and their villages now enter fully into the national Indian holiday, which is also a Hindu festival day, in order to demonstrate to their Hindu neighbors that, as Muslim Indians, they respected and shared this important cultural tradition with the Hindu majority country.

Similarly, the IARF through its member groups and chapters is engaged in promoting religious freedom and mutual respect in Northern Ireland, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, France, England, Israel and the Palestine national Authority, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Canada, the United States, Nigeria, South Africa, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

These are many different ways that religious dialogue is organized in these various cultural contexts. But in each case the IARF is guided by the following principles:

1) An interfaith strategy should begin with persons, not with problems. We come together as religious persons, because we share a commitment that is grounded in the spiritual and ethnical teachings of our religious communities. We are not simply individuals who face social problems. We are religious people who are motivated and informed by our traditions of devotion and discipline and who know, therefore, that we may be able to create new ways of addressing our common concerns. The difference in approach is subtle but significant. We begin with ourselves, with our personal obligations and our religious communities, not with our problems. We are called into action by our understanding of God or Dharma or the kami, and we are concerned not only with solving problems but with living faithfully in harmony with others and the earth.

2) An interfaith strategy should emphasize relationships and not only results. No matter what problems we hope to solve, we must foster greater understanding, trust, and mutual respect among people of different religious communities. We must not sacrifice relationships for results, because lasting results require relationships. We must avoid entering into interfaith relationships merely as a means to an end, and instead allow these interfaith relationships to define both our goals and the strategies we create to attain them. In interfaith work we must nurture friendship, loyalty, and appreciation for one another and our different religious communities.

3) An interfaith strategy should expand our sense of duty to others and to the earth. Our ancient traditions define our duties toward members of our families and cultures, but may not take into account the interfaith and intercultural reality of modern society. The obligations we feel for elders and teachers must be accompanied today by respect for the members of our society who have different religious and cultural traditions. We must embrace human rights as the social condition for human dignity in the world today. Moreover, we must join with all other members of our society and gratefully accept responsibility for the earth which sustains us and all that lives.

If there is to be harmony on earth, there must be harmony among the religious communities. And this harmony must begin within our own cultures. We must think globally but act locally, where our actions can make a difference and where we understand the choices we must make to all do our part; as the effort of each person and every community makes an important contribution to the harmony of the world.

For are we not like members of an orchestra, each of us playing an instrument in section, and all the sections of the orchestra playing together in order to create beautiful music ? Like members of an orchestra, who tune to be in harmony with those in their section, and tune their section of instruments to be in harmony with other sections of the orchestra, we must tune our minds and hearts through the spiritual disciplines of our tradition and through religious dialogue, tune ourselves with the other

members of religious community and then all the religious communities with each other, so that our harmony may reflect and add to the wondrous life of our earth community.

Working for the Benefit of Others



The Rev. Munemichi Kurozumi
The Next Chief Patriarch of Kurozumikyo Shinto

It is indeed a great honour for me to have this opportunity to speak to you about "the Development and Future Prospects of Religious Dialogue" at this highly precious and momentous Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace. Standing in front of you, this feeling of honour and gratefulness is simply beyond words.

Now, before going to the main points of my speech, I would like to congratulate you on the opening of this impressive "Interreligious Gathering of World Peace," commemorating the 10th anniversary of the "Religious Summit meeting on Mt. Hiei" and attended by prominent religious representatives and leaders from around the world with their full endorsement of the cause of the Meeting. I believe that this gathering was made possible because of the long respected religious tradition of Mt. Hiei as a centre for Japanese Buddhism on the one hand, and the continuous "interreligious cooperation" among members of religious organizations initiated by Oomoto and other religious organizations, as well as Rissho Kosei-kai, on the other. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my heart-felt appreciation and respect to each of those concerned who have made a tremendous contribution and put their interreligious cooperation into practice.

It has been said for a long time that the religions of the world, which primarily serve peace and people's happiness, have become the direct cause of wars and regional conflicts. It is even said, especially after the end of the cold war, that "we are entering into an era of religious conflicts." I find this quite regrettable as a religious person myself. I certainly admit, however, that ethnic and religious differences have influenced conflicts in the long course of history. But I do not think that ethnicity and religion were the direct causes of the conflicts. The ethnic conflicts, for the Japanese in general, may appear to have little relation to our everyday lives, mainly because we live in a rather homogeneous society on an isolated island. On the other hand, most countries around the world are comprised of several different ethnic groups as citizens within their own territories. Though each ethnic group has its own language and religious traditions, the sense of belonging to the same country bound by social contract, brother-and-sisterhood, solidarity and the like binds them to the same nationality. But, when this sense of social contract, brotherhood and solidarity fall apart for some reason, their harmonious coexistence may collapse. They then start to develop distrust for each other and try to adhere to their own ethnic background and religious tradition upon which they themselves depend as the very root of their existence. Then, struggle against neighbors of different religions may even arise within their own country.

Taking a closer look at various regional conflicts, however, I presume that most were caused fundamentally by some economic condition, such as a crush of interest in maintaining territory or trade routes, et cetera. There may be a conflict of trying to extend or protect the vested rights and interests by some limited number of ambitious political leaders et cetera, but the very root of such conflicts is considered to be in the so-called "problem of poverty" found in many countries. I think that we human beings can have warm feelings of comradeship toward our fellow country people of different ethnic groups when we get into a situation of being unable to obtain food and water to survive. The sense of hatred against a conflicting group takes over everything else, sticking to and depending on one's own religio-ethnic background.

As seen in the North-South problem, we can easily understand the difficulty in solving such huge economic problems. But when we see that the real cause of such problems is economic or danger of survival rather than religious in nature, I see there is a possibility that we, religious people, can go beyond the boundaries of religions and languages, and exchange dialogues. We can then work together to carry out some concrete action contributing to world peace by positively and energetically promoting purely humanitarian activities for the weak and those who suffer from such conflicts and disasters. The underlying philosophy for this cooperative action is the ideal of mutual aid, reflecting 'the spirit of unselfishness', or 'altruism' which all the religions share in common .

In Okayama, a city in the southern mainland of Japan, there was an international conference entitled "the 3rd Okayama NGO Summit for International Contribution," organized by Okayama Topia for International Contribution (OTIC), an umbrella organization of Japanese NGOs in Okayama, chaired by myself. The conference was held in November 1996, and a "Religious NGO Conference on Humanitarian Support" was conducted as the main event. We invited 34 representatives from 10 different countries mainly from the Asian region. There in the Conference, the establishment of the "Religious NGO Network on Humanitarian Support" (RNN) was unanimously decided. Newsletters were planned to be used for informational exchange between the members of religious NGO's. This endeavour goes beyond the boundaries of different religions, denominations or sects, and can be an actual implementation of "cooperative action through religions" which is purely humanitarian in nature. It does not mean that all the members of religious NGO's are involved in the same project, but that each member can analyze the information provided by the newsletters and emergency information notices and make use of them as much as possible in their own activities, programmes and projects. I believe this form of humanitarian activity based on religious dialogue and cooperation is one of the ways that we, religious people, can contribute to fulfilling the needs of our society or any part of the globe. This may even pave the way for changing the general public's negative image of the religions as the cause of war and regional conflicts. Now, if you are interested in the "Religious NGO Network on Humanitarian Support" (RNN), please feel free to contact me. I will be happy to provide more information.

Last, please allow me to make a humble suggestion to you. This is a suggestion I would like to make from the standpoint of a Japanese religious person for our better future and prosperity. I would like for us to promote the importance of "the bond between mother and infant." I feel that the recent climate of the Japanese society is inclined to be excessively materialistic. Particularly, the younger generation tend to loose a healthy balance of materialistic desire and spiritual value. Recently, we hear that an increasing number of children suffer from heavy mental and emotional stress.

An extremely cruel and inhuman murder by a 14-year-old boy recently occurred in Kobe. Some specialists commented that the case was symbolic of our distorted and stressful society. Some also pointed out that one of the underlying causes of this terrible crime could be the boy's very weak emotional and physical ties with his mother during his babyhood, and that this had hampered his mental and spiritual development. This makes me feel compelled as a religious person to recommend to you the importance of a strong bond between mother and infant. I feel that it is my duty to convey this message widely to young mothers today. However, this does not mean that I am against working mothers and women's advancement in society. I would like to say, however, that the period starting from pregnancy to the time when a child establishes his or her self is the vital period for nurturing mutual trust and positive feelings toward the outer world. This, what I call "sacred bond-making work," can be done only by the mother of the infant, and although important, the father can only be supportive in this. I believe that child rearing by the mother's love and devoted care expressed through breast-feeding, pampering and talking, will be the fundamental basis for developing firm bonds between the two and cultivate a true human spirit. We may pay a very big price for our future by neglecting this care. I suppose that this is also one of the most important roles we should play as religious persons, and I believe this could be done as our "cooperative action through religions." I hope you will agree with this point, and with it conclude my speech. Thank you for your attention.

To Forge the Secondary Language of Cooperation

Dr. William F. Vendley
Secretary General
World Conference on Religion and Peace



It is a great pleasure to be here with you and to add my voice to all the ones before me who have congratulated the organizers of this splendid event. I ask your permission to make a very special acknowledgment of Prof. Masao Abe, my Zen professor when I was much younger, twenty years ago in Japan. Prof. Abe trained me in Zen Buddhism for over five years. Not only did he help me in Myoshinji, but he took me into his home many days and took time and committed himself to training young men and women in the spirituality of Zen Buddhism. Prof. Abe was wise enough also to encourage me to take my Catholicism seriously. And Prof. Abe, I want to thank you publicly for being so gracious to me as a young man.

This morning, when I woke up, I felt full of energy and full of life, a marvelous feeling. I sat down and picked up the paper which I had prepared and I began to read it. And suddenly I felt enormously tired and sleepy. Now this is the last session of the afternoon and I'm afraid that if I read my paper to you, you will fall into such a deep trance that you may miss the meal that will come after this session. So, Mr. Moderator, with your kind permission, I'm going to illustrate the point of my paper with an example and this is going to make a special demand on our translator who has assured me he will assist us.

So, with your permission, my challenge was to talk about the future development of dialogue. And in my paper I suggest that a critical central direction of that future development will be cooperation, real cooperation about real problems. If religion is a matter of ultimate concern, ultimate caring, then indeed we are challenged as religious people to care together, to work together, where care overlaps. My paper goes on to talk about a language of cooperation, and at the end of my remarks I would like to return to that central point.

However, I would like to illustrate care by a reality that is represented very dramatically right now in this particular room. I'm referring to Cardinal Puljić who is with us. And I would like to share an episode of stunning importance for all of us who are concerned about real religious cooperation.

On June 9th of this year, 1997, Cardinal Puljić with his religious colleagues in Sarajevo demonstrated extraordinary courage, courage of cooperation. They issued a joint statement, standing side by side publicly, about their commitment to a framework for cooperation. Now I would like to share with you the characteristics of that framework. But first of all, I'd like to underline the really heroic dimensions of that act of collaboration. Cardinal Puljić stayed in Sarajevo throughout the siege of the war. There were those within his own community who at times suggested that he should leave that city. He refused to do that. He refused to do it because his religion told him he had to promote common living among all men and women. Now in that situation there is enormous pressure upon the religious community. That community is going to place a pressure on its leadership. This was true in every community there. This pressure was from outside the community under threat, and there was pressure inside the community.

I would like to illustrate how severe that pressure is by referring to one of the colleagues of Cardinal Puljić, the number two Islamic leader in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now this gentleman lost two of his children to snipers. He lost his wife to snipers. He lost his granddaughter to snipers. Now, imagine, if you will, being able to walk into the room, even though you are very sophisticated religious leader, and being able to walk across that room and shake the hand of the religious leader whose community, you recognize, was involved in the murder of four of those you held most dear. That's a dramatic example, but that's an example of what every religious leader in that country has had to experience either directly or within their faith family.

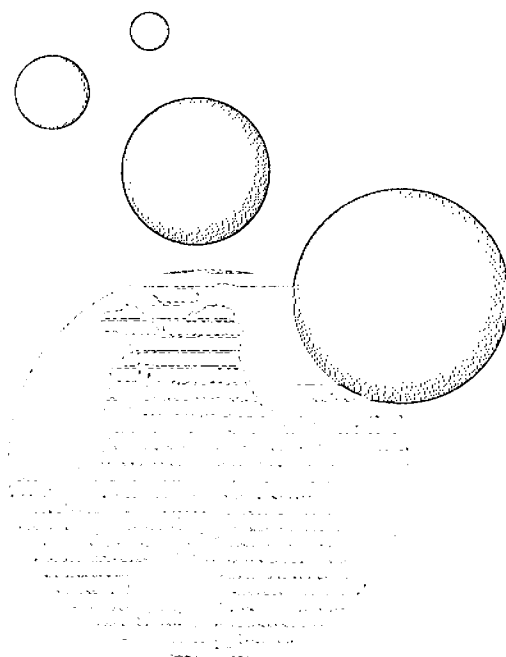
So, it's that kind of enormous pressure that the courage that Cardinal Puljić with his fellow colleagues have withstood with great firmness. If I can summarize, it goes like this. Cardinal Puljić found, and pressed his community to find, the courage to forgive the unforgivable. But he took another step. It demands a greater courage, and it is courage, to ask for forgiveness when one's own community under the terrible pressure of war inevitably falls victim to less than holy pressure. And it's that kind of courage that is, first of all, demanded of a religious leader, but, second of all, beautifully, happily, it is contagious. It can spread.

One example of it calls forth yet another example. Very recently Cardinal Puljić also assisted all of us. He went personally to meet with the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Beograd, an act of great imagination and initiative on his part, and he was able to initiate a personal dialogue at the highest level, and the fruits of that dialogue are a formal commitment by the Serbian Orthodox Church to join with Cardinal Puljić and Islamic leaders and Jewish leaders to build an inter-religious council in Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to the social reconstruction of their country. I would ask you with humility

to join in an acknowledgment of Cardinal Puljić and his leadership.

Now, the next point I would like to make is the linkage, the linkage to the kind of courage and leadership that I've just been speaking about. The religious linkages go literally around the world and they are here in this room. And if I note the ones just in this room, it is alone quite impressive. On the Catholic side, for example, Cardinal Arinze, deeply and clearly aware of initiatives taking place in Bosnia, was able to give critical support to Cardinal Puljić. On the Islamic side, for example, the Crown Prince of Jordan, whom we were able to contact, and Doctor Al-Obaid, of the Muslim World League who is in the very next room and others were able to give great and critical support to the religious leaders, the religious Islamic leadership, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rabbi David Rosen sitting over here, well known to all of us, a deep friend, a well known figure to the Jewish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, able to stay in communication with them, invited through me to be a person they would hope to have address a conference we hoped to hold in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the Orthodox side, not represented in this room at this moment, but our ability to reach around the world to meet with Patriarch Pavre of the Russian Orthodox Church, and to meet with his All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople, eminent Orthodox leaders, and who were able to support their brothers and sisters in a very difficult period. All of this was able to work at the same time to both acknowledge courage and creativity, and provide careful support for it. Here in Japan, Reverend Tatsuo Miyake, earlier on in the war, was committed to providing humanitarian relief and did so. And our organization, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, privileged to work with Cardinal Puljić and his colleagues, sought the means and energy to be able to build an office in Sarajevo and put together a staff. I'm grateful to acknowledge President Nikkyo Niwano, who was the one who stepped forward very quietly, very modestly seeking nothing else than simply to assist his religious colleagues to carry on their work. So the linkages are profound. They're deep and it's up to us religious people to fully exercise those linkages. Again, here in this room Prof. Iisaka, the Secretary General of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace, Reverend Michio Miyake, Secretary General of WCRP Japan, professionally involved in bringing those linkages into profound action both here in Japan, in Asia and indeed around the world.

My final point is to come back to the statement that Cardinal Puljić was so instrumental in drafting and signing. That statement was not a Muslim statement. That statement was not a Catholic statement or an Orthodox statement or a Jewish statement. Each of those great traditions have their own remarkable, primary for them, languages. That statement was a public statement. It was made in what for each of these communities is a secondary language, a second language. I would humbly suggest to you that the example which has been provided to us illustrates the need for all of our communities to become bilingual. We should own and treasure our primary languages. They are full



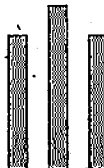
of wealth—all the traditions that they have brought forth, the customs, the habits, the prayers, the arts. But beyond that we have to find a way to forge a secondary language of cooperation, a language within which we can map out our shared care, a language with which we can agree to disagree without thereby demeaning or devaluing the other persons' sincerity in their own faith.

Finally, I would like to suggest humbly to all of us in this room that here we are a short distance away from a neighbor with great stress. I'm speaking of our friends in North Korea. And I would humbly suggest that the best way to honor the kind of creative leadership that Cardinal Puljić and his colleagues have demonstrated is for us in each of our respective ways as religious people and communities to think of ways that we could come to the assistance of our brothers and sisters in North Korea.

Thank you very much.

(transcribed from a recording of the actual speech)





Session 2

The Role of Religion in the Twenty First Century

- Theme ① Approaching the Young Generation and Non-religious People
- Theme ② The Responsibility that People of Faith should Undertake towards Human Rights in the Twenty First Century
- Theme ③ Establishing the Basic Idea of Interdependence for Harmony of Life
- Theme ④ Religiously Based Contributions to Society

Theme 1 Approaching the Young Generation and Non-religious People

Committed to "the Art of Loving"

Miss Natalia Dallapiccola
Center of Interreligious Dialogue
Focolare Movement



I would like to thank those who have organized the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting for having invited me, as a representative of the Focolare Movement, to give a few reflections on approaching the young generation and non-religious people.

First and foremost, with the greatest respect and gratitude, I would like to pay tribute to the Venerable Etai Yamada, as I believe we owe the birth of this interreligious meeting to his great vision together with his profound spirit of peace and compassion. I got to know him in Assisi in 1986 at the first large meeting of prayer for peace. I still hold very dear memories of the various conversations I had with him from then on. I am certain that he is present amongst us in these days.

I would also like to recall how struck he was by the group of boys and girls who came here to Mt. Hiei ten years ago to bring a message for world peace, signed by 150,000 boys and girls, addressed to the religious representatives gathered here.

Those boys and girls were "Young for Unity" and in these ten years they have multiplied throughout the world; they are the best witnesses of how aware young people are of the fact that the future of humanity rests on their shoulders.

Who exactly are the "Young for Unity?" Alongside the New Youth Movement, they are part of the youth branches of the Focolare Movement, which is present in the Catholic Church, in 300 other Christian Churches, and in many religious groups; also people with no religious belief adhere to the Movement.

Seeking to build unity between individuals, between groups, between nations; dreaming of a future reality which can be summed up by the words: United World, the Focolare Movement wishes to give its specific contribution to world peace.

What is the secret through which it attracts people of every religious belief? What is the bond of unity, the reason for peace which fascinates and draws even people with no religious belief ?

"It is love. And love beats in every human heart. For the followers of Christ it can termed 'agape', which means participating in the very love that is the life of God: a strong love, capable of loving even those who do not reciprocate, who may even attack us like enemies, a

love capable of forgiving.

For the followers of other religions this love can be called benevolence and is expressed by that so-called 'golden rule,' the precious tenet found in many religions, which says: 'Treat others as you would like to be treated. Do not treat others as you would not like to be treated yourself.'

For those people who have no religious faith love could mean philanthropy, solidarity, non-violence."¹

This then is the key to approaching the young people of our times, because they prefer living witnesses rather than teachers. They want to see people who are fulfilled and who live up to the ideals they believe in; these are the kind of people they wish to have as their leaders. One of these leaders that young people recognize and follow, internationally well-known, is Chiara Lubich, foundress and President of the Focolare Movement.

I consider it the greatest grace of my life to have had the opportunity of being with Chiara from the very beginning of her divine adventure during the second world war, when I was 19 years old. I have been able to witness the birth and coming to life of a movement which is certainly not the fruit of human effort alone; it is permeated with a spiritual strength which comes from on High.

"It has given rise to a new style of life... which is inspired by Christian principles. But it does not ignore — in fact it highlights — the parallel values contained in other faiths and cultures. It brings peace and unity to this world of ours which is striving to secure peace, to strengthen it."²

This lifestyle or this spirituality, which has a particularly communitarian dimension, has love as its strong point. Its point of departure is the discovery of God as Love, God as Father, and in practical terms it means living as children of the One Father, as brothers and sisters of one another. From this stems what Chiara has termed "the art of loving," taken from the Gospel and put into practice by men and women of every faith and even by people without any religious beliefs, who find that it highlights the values in which they believe.

This art of loving consists of four fundamental points:

The first point: **to love everyone.** We can make no distinction between pleasant or unpleasant; beautiful or ugly; fellow-citizen or foreigner; white, black or yellow; European, American, African or Asian, because love knows no discrimination.

The second point: **to be the first to love.** Whoever possesses true love does not wait to be loved but is the first to begin, taking the first step towards the other.

The third point: **to love others as ourselves** and so as the "Golden rule" says: treat others as you would like to be treated. Also Gandhi said: "You and I are one and the same thing. I cannot hurt you without hurting myself."

The fourth point: **to make ourselves one.** To know how to make ourselves one with others, which means to make their worries, their thoughts, their sufferings, their joy, our own. This way of living demands that we empty ourselves totally in order to identify with the other and understand him.

The younger generations have taken this art of loving on board as their ideal and it has resulted in a

wonderful array of practical initiatives both on a personal and a social level.

Young people, in particular, are beginning to take on a culture of giving. They reject the reasoning of making a profit at any cost because they see it has generated a culture based on the individual and purely on possessing. They are convinced that the human person is made to give and they reach their fulfillment by living out solidarity, by sharing. They have really taken to heart Chiara's proposal regarding economics which is called "the economy of communion." This project consists of giving birth to, transforming or converting where a part of the profit is shared for social actions to help those in need.

There is however another problem which assails humanity: it is the problem of conflict — be it national, between different ethnic groups, or racial — this conflict is widespread throughout the entire population. Chiara has proposed something here too, which can seem like a utopia but in reality it is the indispensable basis for building a civilization of love and contributing to harmonious unity among peoples: it is to love the other's country as our own. With that courage and ardour which is typical of young people, in the midst of the world's most troubled spots, we have seen many initiatives for reconciliation multiply, likewise efforts to prevent conflict, a rejection of violence in countries like Zaire, Burundi, Bosnia, precisely in all the countries where ethnic and social contrasts are at their greatest.

These facts and many other practical actions could give reason for those who have the future of our world very much at heart. We are all encouraged by the thought that there are many young people who have thrown themselves into an adventure which can change their own destiny and that of humanity.

Allow me to say one last thing. Although at times young people might be seen as superficial and half-hearted, nonetheless, they do know how to face up to life's difficulties because:

"...this mutual love, this unity gives great joy to those who put it into practice. However, it requires commitment, daily training and sacrifice....

Nothing good, nor useful, nor fruitful for the world can be achieved without knowing how to accept effort and suffering.

Dedicating one's life to the cause of peace is a commitment not to be taken lightly! It takes courage; you need to know how to suffer."³

Our young people are well aware of this and this is what makes them mature. They are conscious that:

"...if more people were to accept suffering out of love, the suffering that love requires, then it would become the most powerful weapon to give humanity its highest dignity: a dignity which lies in being not a collection of people living side by side and often in conflict with each other, but rather in being a single people, enriched by one another's diversity and safeguarding each one's identity."⁴

I would like to conclude by citing the hope-filled words of John Paul II that "the closing of the century and the coming millennium might see the building of a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom and peace," with the joy to be able to observe "how the tears shed this century have prepared the ground for a new springtime of the human spirit."⁵

1 Chiara Lubich, Symposium at the United Nations Headquarters, May 28, 1997

2 *ibid.*

3 *ibid.*

4 *ibid.*

5 Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*. Weekly Edition in English, No.41, October 11, 1995, P. 10

Unity in Variety: The Vision of the Lotus Sutra

Dr. Gene Reeves

Unitarian Universalist Association



It is a great pleasure for me, even deeply thrilling, to be able to participate in this tenth anniversary celebration of the Religious Summit on Hiei-zan. No place could be more appropriate for a religious summit, as Hiei-zan is one of the most important homes, so to speak, of the Lotus Sutra.

In the new Pilgrims' Hall of Rissho Kosei Kai in Tokyo there is a great, two-story high, set of three murals of three mountains: Mt. Gridhrakuta or "Vulture Peak" in India, where according to legend the Lotus Sutra was preached by Shakyamuni Buddha, Mt. T'ien-t'ai in southern China, where the great interpreter of the Lotus Sutra, Chih-i, founded the T'ien-t'ai school of Buddhism based largely on the Lotus Sutra, and Mt. Hiei, where Saicho (Dengyo Daishi) founded the Japanese Tendai school, which is in some ways the mother of all of the Japanese Buddhist schools developed during the Kamakura period of Japanese history — particularly the Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren schools.

These three mountains, one in India, one in China, one in Japan, have been special homes or geographical foundations for the Lotus Sutra from the time of Shakyamuni to the present. What, you may be wondering, does all of this have to do with the theme of this session, a session which has to do with approaching youth and non-religious people in the 21st century ?

First, I should say that I do not consider myself to have any special authority or wisdom for speaking on this subject. I did not choose it, but was chosen for it. But my suspicion is that the youth and non-religious people of 21st century, at least of the first part of it, will not be very different from the youth and non-religious people of the latter part of this century.

And what youth and non-religious people today need from religious leaders, that is from religious

leaders who lead and are not merely administrators, is not only teachings, though they are very important, and not only rituals, though they too are very important, and not only religious institutions, though they are very important, but also what I would call vision, especially a kind of vision which can enable human beings to live more productive lives by both giving them a sense of grounding in reality and inspiration to creatively move beyond the world that is given to them; a vision which gives people both roots and wings, stems and flowers, a place to come from and a place to head toward. Without vision, said a prophet, the people perish.

Youth and non-religious people need, in other words, a vision which will enable all of us to develop more harmonious relationships between our selves, our countries, our religions and between human beings and our natural environment.

Without such vision, I believe, youth and non-religious people of the 21st century will continue to see religious leaders making pretentious claims to superiority for their own religion or even sole possession of truth and goodness; they will continue to see religions used to promote wars between peoples of different religions; they will continue to see religions used as a basis for intolerance, persecution and killing. Many youth and non-religious people of the 21st century may even be convinced, based on considerable evidence, that organized religions serve not God or Buddha, not the earth, not humanity, but only the selfish interests of religious leaders who have no vision of a more harmonious, life affirming, life enhancing, world.

Perhaps some vision, or at least some basis for such a vision, can be found in all great religious traditions. But such a vision is especially apparent as one of the most powerful underlying themes of the Lotus Sutra. It is a vision of unity in variety and variety in unity. Some schemes of thought propose a unity which is so powerful, so magnificently overwhelming, that the reality of the many disappears within the reality of the one, like drops in an ocean. Other schemes envision a variety, or at least a duality, so powerful, so deeply rooted in the nature of things, that there is finally no unity at all, only a war between forces of good and evil. The Lotus Sutra, on the other hand, in countless ways envisions a world in which there is a real and valuable many within an integrated or unifying whole.

In the Lotus Sutra we find the often quoted simile of the plants. In it, the world is envisioned as a great variety of plants — great trees, small shrubs, grasses, herbs — a great profusion of different kinds of living plants. The Buddha-dharma is envisioned as a great rain cloud which provides rain equally for all of the plants, but which the plants receive according to their need and ability to be nourished by the rain. Here we have, then, a vision of unity as a common nourishment which enables a great diversity to live.

In the vision of the Lotus Sutra there are many ways, even innumerable many ways, to salvation, often symbolized as the three vehicles. These many are all means appropriate to some situation, by which the Buddha, and all who do the work of the Buddha, strive to fulfill the Buddha's original vow to save all living being — this unifying purpose being symbolized especially as the one vehicle. Thus in the Lotus Sutra we find images both of a common nourishment or origin and of a common goal and purpose.

Among the many stories in the Lotus Sutra is a story about a magical castle. A group is travelling a way to salvation that is extremely steep, arduous and difficult, so extremely difficult that they want to give up their pursuit of salvation and turn back. In response to this situation, their leader conjures up a magical

place, a castle where they can relax, rest and recuperate. This done, they are able to continue on the path toward the great treasure.

Here again, we have a vision of teachings as ways of helping people along the way of life. There are many such teachings and practices, temporary resting places, which are useful and effective in helping people find their way, a way which is also the Buddha way.

The Lotus Sutra does not speak directly of many religions. Its authors did not, and could not, know of what we today think of as the great religions, such as Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam or even Hinduism. But its message and relevance is clear: for the wholeness and health of the world the many religions can be a blessing. The many are needed if the unity which nourishes them is to flourish and if the goal of the health and salvation of all is to be approached.

This is not to say what the many are all the same. They are not. Rooted in different founders and revelations and cultural traditions they are very different from one another. They are a real many. Nor is this to suggest that the religions are all equally good, much less equally good for everybody. Some religions have found more effective practices than others; some may have more uplifting stories than others, some may be blessed for a time with greater leaders than others. But to the extent that we are nourished by the same source and pursue the same end or ends, they are, or can be, together as one. We can cooperate to make the world a saner, healthier, more wholesome, more beautiful place for all.

This Lotus Sutra vision is not, of course, the only way to view religions. But it is, I believe, a magnificent vision, one which can inspire any and all of us to join together in religious cooperation for the good of all, to the end that our world may become a more peaceful, more beautiful, place to live.

That's why it is extraordinarily fitting that these religious summits are being held at Hiei-zan, a mountain so closely associated in Japan with the life of the Lotus Sutra.

Theme ② The Responsibility that People of Faith should Undertake
towards Human Rights in the Twenty First Century

Dedicated to the Rights of Minorities

The Rev. Fr. Gonzalo Ituarte Verduzco, O.P.
Vicar for Justice and Peace
Diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas



I dare to speak about the responsibility of people of faith for human rights only as an exercise of criticism of my own Church, the Roman Catholic, and, from there on, I offer some hints that may help the purpose of our discussion. I do it with deep respect for all beliefs and religions, and with the sole purpose of sharing experience and hope.

Without judging the moral intentions of peoples of other times, it is very clear that from the origin of the Mexican nation, the Catholic Church has had a presence with remarkable contributions but also with negative effects. Here, I will mention some aspects related to the understanding, practice and violation of human rights and, more specifically, the rights of the poor.

After the political and religious war of the Iberic Peninsula reconquest, the Catholic Kings carried out, with a supposed "divine right", the conquest and evangelization of what is today's Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the name of God and the king, the conquerors forced the Indian nations, depriving them of their sovereignty, their possessions and their freedom, and imposing on them the "true religion"; they carried the Cross of Christ, on which they crucified the Indians. This violence gave birth to Latin American countries and their multiple cultures, but the price was paid by the defeated, who in many places are still segregated until this very day. It was clearly the ideological use of the Catholic religion and its association with power as the State religion — and the only one allowed — an extremely useful instrument for the Spanish empire interests.

But also from within the same Catholic Church a severely critical stand emerged against the colonial policies violating Indian peoples' rights, giving birth to the foundational doctrine of human rights and international humanitarian rights. The names of Fray Anton de Montesinos, Fray Predro de Cordoba, Fray Francisco de Vitoria and, of course, Fray Bartolome de las Casas, come to our memory, for all are related to the defense of the Indians before the state, before the church and before the conquerors and colonizers.

I mention this historic data because I come from the land of Indians where Fray Bartolome de las Casas

was first Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of San Christobal, in Chiapas, Mexico, known nowadays because of the rebellion of the Zapatista Indians who, together with all the Mexican Indians, are struggling for their rights five hundred years later.

In very different ways throughout history, the Catholic religion has been used to legitimize, conceal or justify the violation of human rights, up to the drama of civil war that with religious motivations, among others, bloodied the Mexican nation. It is clear to me that the association of the Catholic Church with political and economic powers has been a negative element that has contributed to the systematic and structural violation of human rights, although I accept that there could have been goodwill in people. The logic of the economic and political powers give priority to their interests and to use any resources available to them. That is why I think it is a must that we Catholics review our attitudes and commitments to prevent our faith from being used against life, against the rights of the people, and against the whole creation.

As religious freedom is a world-wide recognized right, we must exercise it independent of cultural, political, economic or social powers and have a critical attitude to contribute making such powers carry out the legitimate assignments required by the peoples. In the Catholic world, the existence of confessional political parties has, in most cases, evidenced the use of the moral authority of the church to support authoritarian and even dictatorial political regimes with serious violations of human and people's rights. The ambiguous relation of catholic ministers with the military has to be carefully studied.

The continuity of the Vatican State, as center of the Catholic Church, with its complex diplomatic network, has also contributed in Mexico, and Latin America, to violations of human rights and even the rights of the Church. The civil and military authorities have known how to utilize such structures, not without the complicity of some Catholic officials. It would be very healthy for the Catholic Church, in the new millenium, to get rid of its State structure, specially of its ambassadors (Nuncios), who have badly performed, as they have been associated with the dictatorships that shadowed the life in Latin America. In many cases they have delightedly fallen into the game of power.

From the Vatican Council II in the sixties, the Catholic Church has deepened its doctrine on religious freedom, interreligious relations, cooperation and tolerance. However, in the real practice of its members and hierarchy, many times that doctrine is not applied, generating negative tensions which impede fruitful collaboration with other religions, and even with other Christian denominations.

As Catholics we must insist on educating our community and creating mechanism that allow us to aggregate our efforts with other communities of faith, to encourage the practice and defense of human rights for all, always emphasizing the rights of the poorest, of the ethnic groups, of the minorities, of the excluded, of the invisible people.

The effectiveness shown by the Catholic Church to deepen and also update its Doctrine on Human Rights, confers on it a responsibility to develop the education and training its members in the theological foundations of human rights and the dignity of creation. From this point on, it is urgent to review the legislation and internal practices of the Church, to undertake the necessary changes that will bring full respect of our community and the rights of all.

I am particularly concerned with: The exclusion of suffering women within my Church. They have no access to positions of authority and services that are reserved to men, while our teachings define equal dignity for all human beings.

The segregation of Indian peoples whose culture is not really considered and respected. Indians are not allowed to be full members of the Church. This is a historic debt that the Catholic Church must settle before the arrival of the next millenium.

The condition of the minorities and the poor is also a very important challenge because it condemns them from birth to be unable to reach full participation in society to which they have rights.

At the present time, many people have abandoned the Catholic Church because they feel that their humanistic ideals and eagerness for justice are not compatible with the behavior of people that legitimate violence and injustice with religious statements.

The understanding of human rights, observed from the perspective of religious faith, necessarily goes beyond academic and political definitions; it reaches the meaning and destiny of human life in harmony with creation. In the coming years the complementary and multiple understanding that the different communities of faith provide to humankind must be a critical contribution the economic and political system, in order for them to create conditions in which violations of human rights will be an exception, and not the daily drama of millions of human beings.

In the history of mankind, world religions have been the cause or excuse or foundation of wars, divisions, segregation and violence. It is now time, that in a mature stage of the human race, and with the wise contribution of the different religions, we reach a purification of the doctrines with joint responsibility. It is also time for religions to liberate them from being utilized for purposes different from those of the communities of faith, whose priority is to create communion of mankind with the divine or the absolute, with the universe and with the interior of the human community.

It is imperative for the different communities of faith to undertake a self-criticism which will purify them of all destructiveness and to accept plurality with a realistic response. It is urgent to have interreligious dialogue in order to reach a respectful and fruitful relation that will lead us to a real collaboration to promote and defend human dignity in a harmonious context.

Each religion shall seek in its own sources of knowledge whatever might enrich human contact and favor a deeper understanding of reality and human destiny.

Facing economic and political systems, the religions have the unavoidable task of being a moral reference and critical instance for demanding their transformation in order to protect and increase the rights of the poor, the women, the segregated and the minorities.

The time has come for reconciliation and collaboration. We cannot allow the great energy of religious traditions to be wasted. We are called to have a common and convincing search to be the engines of development, of internal justice, of new roles of ethnical norms, respectful of tradition but enlightened by new realities, and by leaving behind all kinds of violence, competition and confrontation.

All the people of faith share the great responsibility of educating mankind on the sanctity of life, of human rights, of nature. We have to walk through the joyful path of dialogue and interreligious collaboration which will lead us to respect the rights of each religious tradition and to reach, in this times of globalization, with the contribution of all, the Universal Peace for the first time in the history of mankind.

The Question of Human Rights and the Responsibility of Religious People — a view of a Shin Buddhist

The Rev. Shin'in Nishida
Director of the Kyogaku Institute
of Shinshu Otani-ha



We have been deeply shocked to witness recent incidents that reflect the modern child's deeply distressed heart. I think it symbolizes the problems we today face in terms of the human rights and responsibilities of religious people. People related to a religion are responsible for explaining questions such as "What makes us human beings?" or "What is the reason for human existence?" The words of the boy from the Kobe incident*, "Me as a transparent existence," may be the expression of a mind that has lost the meaning of life. These words leave a potent impression on religious people.

I would like to speak on three points regarding religious people's responsibility towards human rights: first, the theoretical basis of human rights; second, nurturing the sense of human rights; and lastly, a religious community's self-investigation from the viewpoint of human rights.

On the theoretical basis of human rights:

The concept of "human rights" has developed from modern European thought of natural law. The Japanese expression of this concept was created from its European translation, and did not come naturally from daily Japanese thought. Although the phrase has been adopted as a legal term, in some ways it resists being deeply rooted in the Japanese mind. I believe one reason is because the Japanese are unclear regarding its theoretical basis.

"Human rights" is also a new phrase to Japanese Buddhists. However, the absence of the actual phrase does not mean that the idea itself did not exist. Buddhism teaches that in the depths of all sentient beings' hearts is a desire to become buddha. To view all individuals as beings with this deep aspiration to enlightenment, is to view the world through the "eyes" of Buddha. Through the Buddha's vision, we may gain this insight and learn the preciousness of every living being. The Buddha also teaches us that "All sentient beings have buddha nature (*Mahaparinirvanasutra of Mahayana*).". In other words, the Buddha tells us that every one of us has the possibility of becoming buddha (*busho: buddhadhatu*). There are many ways to realize this possibility, even if they may be different in each denomination. Despite these differences, followers will ultimately fulfill their in-depth aspiration and become buddha.

By virtue of being born human among all sentient beings, we are able to listen to the teachings of Buddha. Therefore, we Buddhists view humans as beings who walk the path to enlightenment from their desire to become buddha. Here lies the reason to respect one another. In fact, this is the theoretical basis of "human rights" for Buddhists. This idea also becomes related to the question of the meaning of life.

Second is the question of nurturing the sense of human rights. The issue of the conception of human rights has something fundamentally in common with the idea of life. For this reason, I believe that in order to cultivate the concept of human rights, the sense of life must essentially be fostered. There is a poem reportedly made by Gyoki-bosatsu, a Buddhist monk in Nara period:

*Yamadori no horohoro to naku koe kikeba
chichi katozo omou haha katozo omou.*
(Hearing a bird in the mountain chirping,
I wonder if it was my father or my mother.)

Made by an outstanding Buddhist, this poem seems to express a Buddhist's sense of life from his time. This sense of life expressed in the poem suggests an ancient nurturing and understanding of "human rights," even though the phrase itself did not exist at the time. However, environmental destruction has been taking place under modern civilization in the attempt to conquer nature. We benefit from the present civilization, but the destruction of nature has come to a critical level. Not only that, the development of bio-technology as observed in gene manipulation has surely brought about benefits for human beings, but I also wonder if it has fostered a view of life which regards our internal organs as just parts. I feel these examples reveal the suffering of the modern people's souls brought about by the degeneration of their sense of life. The Kobe incident I referred to at the outset also occurred perhaps because of a weakened sense of life. We cannot find the warmth of a living being, which is made up of emotions such as delight, anger, sorrow or joy, in this boy. His existence seems to have become mechanical and inorganic. If the recovery of the meaning of life is ever to be sought in such situations, religious people are responsible for explaining why life is precious. This also leads into teaching the meaning of life.

Third is the topic on self-investigation of a religious community from the viewpoint of human rights. As religious people we must make certain that human rights are not being violated. However, first of all, we Buddhists are required to check if we have an understanding of human rights in our own lives. This self-inspection must be done in two ways. One is to check matters inside our own denomination. The other is to reflect back on the history of that denomination. When we look back on the history of our denomination, we are not able to deny the fact that we provided the ideology of the ruling classes in support of the government. For instance, we have given the ideological basis of affirming prejudice in our society by asserting that "discrimination is also equality." We have also provided the ideology that makes people resign themselves to their fate through the theory of past karma, which teaches that good causes lead to good effects and bad causes create bad effects. Therefore, the argument follows, social discrimination is the natural consequence of one's own deeds. Not only that, *homyo* or *kaimyo* ("Buddhist names") were used to promote and preserve class segregation. Not only must we inspect these historic facts, but we must also check the religious doctrines and teachings that were used as foundations for discriminatory policies. Now these investigations are earnestly under way in each

denomination. These historic inquisitions are also linked with the self-investigation of the present denominations.

Today I spoke on three points. In short, from our viewpoint, the fundamental challenge of modern society seems to lie in the "loss of meaning." It appears that there is an abysmal "confusion" of contemporary people not knowing how to live. I feel this is at the very heart of the present human rights problem. Consequently, I believe addressing this core is nothing other than the responsibility of religious people.

Last, please let me add one more thing. The Shinshu Otani-ha denomination has been advocating the theme, "*Doho-Shakai*" (the community of fellowship). It is a world where freedom, peace, and equality of rights are realized without violating each person's dignity. Otani-ha looks to a world where we can live the path of "*gansho-jodo*" (aspiring to be born in the Pure Land), which is none other than the path of becoming buddha. I would like to make every effort in promoting the "*Dohokai* Movement" (fellowship movement) with new resolution.

Let me extend my deeply-felt thanks to you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. Thank you.

*the Kobe incident: This refers to a murder and injury case by a 14 year-old boy. The peculiarity and cruelty of the crime shocked the whole nation.

Human Rights and Mother Earth: The Essence of Life

Mrs. Pauline E Tangiora, J.P.

Retired Maori Tribal Elder, Aotearoa, New Zealand



Tena Koe,

Esteemed Elders, Leaders of various religious denominations and to you Honourable President Watanabe and the Tendai Buddhist Denomination, Japan Conference of Religious Representatives, whose invitation has allowed Mr. Joseph Te Rito and myself to humbly attend this auspicious gathering. Our presence on this sacred site will ever have a spiritual influence on our lives in the future, and for generations to come.

In bringing such a diversity of people of faith, and spiritual elders and leaders to join in uplifting a World Community in Prayer, the solving of many problems must eventuate and "A message from Mt. Hiei" to the World thus will be powerful in the Spirit of Peace.

"The Responsibility of People of Faith for Human Rights"

Sunlight filters through the branches as water runs over the waterfall — birds flit from branch to branch — children's laughter wafts in the breeze — Mother Earth has given of her beauty.

Simple laughter is so precious yet why do we not treasure such a jewel ?

Every day we see and hear of injustices but have we become numb to feeling ?

We expound on Earth's orbit — cosmology and its interaction with the universe — the great scientific feats of today's World. We even gather to offer up prayers to align ourselves for safe return of the many who "shoot" into space, yet our eyes have a film over them to the abuse of millions of souls and their human rights being abused.

Our ears do not hear the wail of young and old women and men being denigrated. Our energy level seems to drop a notch when we are asked to support in practical ways another's human rights abuses. Our hands will not write to heads of Governments where these abuses are happening; it is more comfortable to offer a prayer. Do not misunderstand me — prayer is all powerful !

Another perspective in the request for the topic that I asked to address is directed at "People of Faith" — it was a challenge to discourse with my Oxford dictionary to be presented with — "belief in religious doctrine, belief founded on authority, spiritual apprehension of divine truth, system of religious belief" and so on.

Coming from an indigenous community, colonised over the past 160 or more years with various religious perspectives, some of us still retain the essence of the Creator, *Matua lo* — the Creator of all things — that being we must respect all living things, human or otherwise; all have a *Mauri* — a life force, and this must not be watered down.

Our created spirit cannot enter into a particular shelf or drawer — the spiritual directs one to confront, and activate ones responsibility to our fellow brethren. Our obligation puts the onus on each and every one to shoulder another's burden.

The culmination of this climaxes in our commitment to the cause without aligning ourselves to any other agenda.

Human nature as it is often sets us in a quandary — no one likes to be put into a position or predicament of being seen to "follow the norm." However, one's perceived excuses are often of "it may be embarrassing for my business," "costly in that my boss may find it's political and I may lose my job" or that plain rancour arises from the action taken.

Retrenching to a safe place, removing oneself is cosy — however the Spirit deep within us will not allow us a calm and peace that is important within one's life.

Thus having looked at where one wishes to take ones guidance, the power of a person is to be reckoned

with. Our *wairua* (spirit) is strong, has a purpose in life; also fear may flutter in the background when we are challenged with the oppression of another; thus human rights are trampled; our compassion is of no use without action.

Humbleness has much wisdom along with inner strength and the metaphysical takes over.

Right aspirations thus can but only bring auspicious gain; therefore people of faith must face their responsibility. Otherwise how does one activate human rights and the responsibility that is hand in hand with the above.

It would be naive to believe that by merely talking about ones rights and responsibilities all things will change — no, it is the innermost soul must be pacified, otherwise our spirit will not endure a harmony or peaceful co-existence with others around us.

Where our fellow being has been denied access to water, shelter, a place to tread upon our Earth Mother, then we have no right to talk of democracy, or people of faith. The cosmos demands of humanity an ordered wholeness of sharing. The mere fact of the Creator's infallible wisdom has decreed that the Spirit of a person's spirituality may only rest when our whole being is in harmony. Human rights is explicitly tied to the land. We are the land and the land is us; without the land there can be no faith, no need for responsibility for anothers human rights.

We have a saying in my language —

Ki te Taiao

Ki te Ao Marama

Tu toi te Rangi

Tu to te Whenua

Broadly translated —

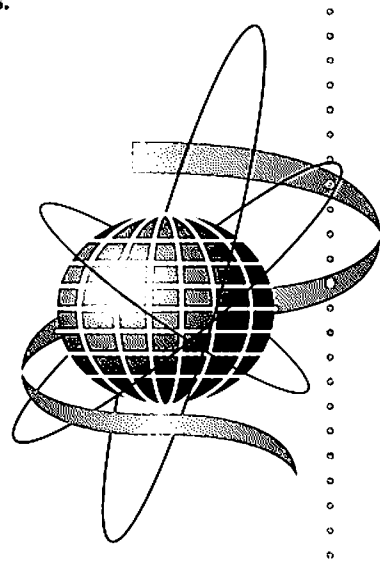
Breath the essence of life into the World

The Environment —

Into this World of light

For the sky will endure

For the land will endure



May we, from whatever Spiritual or religious dimension we are in, come together in respect for each other, so that others may be lifted in spirit, and partake of life's essence, as shown by our collective leadership.

Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou, Tena koutou Katoa.

Human Rights are God-Given

The Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah
Deputy General Secretary
World Council of Churches



A major stride in the field of inter-planetary travel was made on the 4th of July this year, when the Pathfinder enabled the tiny robot, Sojourner, to land on the desolate surface of our neighboring planet Mars, over 120-million miles away from us. The excitement and enthusiasm of the scientific community could be compared only to the other major space event some 28 years ago, when humans walked on the surface of our other neighbor, the moon.

The 20th century, which is fast drawing to its close, will certainly be characterized as the century of major advances in science and technology. These advances, however, have not only reached outer space, but also into the inward structures of the minute and delicate organization of DNA, opening serious possibilities for human beings to tamper with the very building blocks of life.

While rejoicing in the potentials of the human mind, discerning people would not have missed the irony, that while the Pathfinder, which cost some 171 million dollars to build, and the Sojourner, with a 25 million price tag, were probing the desolated surface of Mars, millions of people here on earth live in abject poverty or in refugee or detention camps, denied the basic right to walk on this planet, Earth, with their God-given human dignity. It has been rightly said that in the twenty first century the marvels of modern communications will further push forward the processes of globalization making human life a more closely knit reality.

But our experiences so far, both of advances in science and technology, and the globalization of market forces, have shown that they are based on a logic that takes little or no account of the "human" element. If anything, the forces of technological advance and the global market have led only to the marginalization of the poorer people and nations. Many nations and peoples have become "dispensable" in the interest of progress.

The globalizing forces, primarily based on economic considerations, have also marginalized the power of the state or government as the protector of the rights and interest of the people. These forces have acquired so much influence and control over the economics and the mass media of nations, that they have the power to prop up or bring down governments, effectively reducing their capacity to act on behalf of the people and their rights. On the contrary, many governments have themselves become the perpetrators of human rights violations.

It is this kind of neglect and even abuse of the basic rights of the people at times of wars, or in more subtle forms as in our day, that prompted the world community to adopt in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration attempted to get international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as

to race, sex, language or religion (Article 1—3). These rights were further exemplified in the International Conventions on "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" and a number of other specific human rights treaties dealing with the rights of women, rights of children, torture, genocide, rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, etc.

While specific areas of human rights have to be developed, it is noteworthy that the meaning of human rights has been generally defined by the United Nations as "those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings" (United Nations, 1987).

Religious traditions that believe in God would call them "God-given rights." In the Bible this conviction is affirmed in the declaration that human beings are created in the "image and likeness of God."

The emphasis on the unity of all life in the Asian religious traditions, and the concepts of *dharma*, and *ahimsā* (non-violence) as the principles of existence point in the same direction to the sanctify and dignity of all life. The Buddhist teaching of the "interdependence of all life" and its emphasis on "compassion" reiterate the value of protecting the dignity of life.

In a world where technology, economy and governance are directed by profit motive at the expense of the humane, it becomes the primary duty of religious traditions to uphold the dignity and rights of all persons. It is unfortunate that some sections of the religious community, in all our faith traditions, see the involvement of religious communities in human rights as moving into the "political" arena. They would see the role of religion to be specifically in "spiritual matters", and not in such "secular" concerns as human rights. Thus the voice of religions in the area of human rights is sadly lacking. This is a betrayal of religion itself.

For human dignity, rights and freedoms are of the essence in our being human. The spiritual aspects of human life can never be separated from the social, especially since all religions place great emphasis on how we relate to one another in society. All our religious traditions have had prophets, reformers and saints who have stood up for people who have been treated unjustly, by the denial of their basic rights.

Religious responsibility for human rights, however, should begin, not with pious proclamations, but with our willingness to teach, as part of the elaboration of our own faith, the rights and dignity of all persons and communities; it is only a community that is aware that would also be alert when peoples' rights are violated.

But we will need to go further, to advocate, and, when necessary, to struggle to protect the rights of individuals and communities. It is the duty of all who are concerned with the well-being of the human family to alert the people of the hollowness of progress that neglects the rights of the people, and of the pointlessness of advances that leave sections of human community behind.

In 1928 one of the leading Christian theologians called the Churches to unity with the famous slogan: "The World is too strong for a divided Church." Today we can say that the forces of material progress are too strong for divided religious communities. We need to join forces in the struggle to uphold the dignity and rights of all persons and communities. Our credibility as religious traditions in the next century may well depend on our willingness to do so.

Theme ③ Establishing the Basic Idea of Interdependence for Harmony of Life

Living in Harmony under Common Religious Values

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne
President

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement



I pay my tribute to The Tendai Buddhist Denomination and the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives for organising this Religious Summit. I have no doubt that what was initiated ten years ago by bringing together all religious faiths and sects for our common ideal of successfully combating the global problems we face today will be further strengthened and concretely realized in practice as an outcome of this summit. I am most thankful to the Ven. Eshin Watanabe for inviting me.

All forms of life on our planet are interlinked. From the tiniest living cell to the largest living entity, that is our planet, life cannot exist harmoniously and healthily without this interrelatedness. Having realized this truth, religions emphasize respect for life and love. Lord Buddha laid great emphasis on *metta* or loving kindness towards all beings. In his teaching of dependent origination or *paticca samuppada dhamma* he clearly explained how we are subjected to a chain of cause and effect and beseeched us to be always mindful of this principle if we are to lead a happy and harmonious life.

In spite of all these teachings, generally we see around us nothing but disharmony, chaos and conflict. The human being is internally at war with himself or herself. There is an alienation within human minds and hearts where an individual knows and feels what is the right thing to say or do but is forced by certain circumstances to do exactly the opposite. So within his or her human personality there is a contradiction with which life goes on. This gives such a person great stresses and strains and even silent suffering and pain of mind. It can affect their physical health also leading to serious ailments and even untimely death.

Similarly between members of the same family or with persons outside the family the same kinds of alienations can arise leading to similar sad consequences. This time it is not internalised within a human personality. It has become a conflict situation with serious and far reaching social consequences. The whole society thus has become sick. This is manifested increasingly by the breakdown of family ties, traditional value systems and religious norms, addiction to alcohol and drugs, increase in thefts and crimes, sexual harassment of women and children, political violence and civil wars, and terrorism.

This degeneration is expedited by irresponsible media coverage of these events as sensational stories. People get used to them and children growing up are psychologically affected by them. Scenes of murder, rape, bloodshed and war, as if they are an integral part of general society, are globally shown in a very irresponsible manner by using the electronic communications media. In the international

economy huge amounts of investments are made for this sinful act of wrong livelihood. True development and social harmony are lost sight of and earning money by whatever wrong, unethical and immoral means is legitimised. The whole society gets immersed in looking towards increased economic growth and per capita incomes without taking into consideration real progress towards individual and social good.

Under these circumstances what religions stand for and the spiritual content of human personality and society are totally lost sight of. Even some religious organisations fall prey to this trend. This is not a situation where one religion competes with other religions to increase their sphere of influence. It is a matter of all religions getting together to struggle against irreligion and materialism. What can religions do to counteract this very dangerous trend in our societies? It is my belief that religions should follow a common set of policies and strategies, such as the two I outline below, to contain these destructive forces and rekindle in the minds and hearts of people the basics of spirituality, morality and ethics in all sectors of human affairs at this critical time in our human civilization.

1. Poverty, disease, crime, war, environmental, ecological, bio-diversity destruction and pollution problems, political and economic instabilities, and spiritual and moral degeneration are all interrelated though they appear to be separate issues. It is a vicious circle. So we have to commit ourselves to release positive forces in all these sectors in such a way that our actions and programmes will have a widely felt impact ultimately leading to the acceptance of the idea of an interdependent harmony of life.

2. To succeed in such a constructive programme all religions in spite of their ideological differences should develop a set of commonly acceptable values and work in harmony. They can keep their own identities but should work in harmony to grapple with the common issues that they all face as religious people.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka is a concrete example of such an interfaith approach. Sarvodaya is based on Buddhist philosophy. But it works with all religious communities in Sri Lanka. All are treated as equals irrespective of their caste, race, religion or nationality. During the last 40 years Sarvodaya has succeeded in organising people in nearly 12,000 villages of Sri Lanka. They work in harmony with one another and nature so that they can build through non-violent means a new social order based on spiritual values common to all religions. Sarvodaya has active programmes going on in these villages to eradicate poverty, improve health and sanitation, protect the environment, look after the children, women, old people, disabled and the orphans, build peace and so on. Sarvodaya has demonstrated that spiritual and material well-being can be developed together and in harmony with each other. With support from religious institutions these successful Sarvodaya programmes can be replicated the world over.

Harmony — the Spirit of Shinto

The Rev. Toshihiko Goto
Head Priest
Takachiho Shinto Shrine



It is my honor to have the opportunity to express a Shinto view at this Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace.

There is a multitude of Shinto views of religion, as we often say *yaoyorozu-no-kamigami* (eight million Kami gods). Today, I would like to divert myself from the standpoint of Shinto and instead speak from the personal perspective of a Japanese individual under the influence of Shinto.

Our given theme is "Establishing the Basic Idea of Interdependent Harmony of Life and Religion." When we say "interdependent harmony" today, we are often talking from a global standpoint about harmonious coexistence between religions and nations as well as between man and nature. As our contemporary civilization progresses all these relationships are inseparably intertwined and become closer and closer.

Shinto has its foundation of beliefs in the descriptions or myths of the origin of our nation and others found in the *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and *Nihon-shoki* (the Chronicles of Japan), both of which are the oldest written forms of myth and history of this nation. Shinto has neither founder nor precise teachings. Shinto was born in time immemorial and evolved with our land and nature and has been practiced through rituals. Shinto has evolved in a long history by adopting and taking in new thoughts and values of the time.

Buddhism is said to be transmitted to Japan in 538 A.D. (the 7th Year of the Emperor Kin'mei).

The *Yomeiki* (The Chronicle of the Era of the Emperor Yomei) says that the emperor believes in Buddhism and respects Shinto. Our ancestors used to believe indigenous kami accepted Buddhism as a *Kyaku-naru-kami* (a guest Kami or a foreign Kami). Since then, Shinto and Buddhism maintained a peaceful coexistence over one thousand years in Japan. For instance, Mt. Hiei, the site of our first religious summit, was established by Dengyodaishi Saicho in 789 A.D. (the 7th Year of Enryaku) in order to develop Buddhism from China into a Japanese Buddhism (*Mahayana* Buddhism) suitable for our land and people. A Hiyoshi Shrine which enshrines *Ôyama-kuhi-no-kami* (an earthly kami) exists at Mt. Hiei as a protector god. It is safe to say that rather than confronting each other as a whole Shinto and Buddhism influenced each other and amalgamated with each other to evolve in Japan.

There was a man called "Saigyô" in the Kamakura Era (12th Century) when Japanese Buddhism developed conspicuously. Saigyô went into the priesthood when he was young and devoted himself to Buddhism and poetry. Saigyô is also one of the important persons in the history of Japanese art. Saigyô lived in a period of civil war and deeply believed in Buddhism and yet deeply respected *Kami* also. When he was old Saigyô made offerings of two volumes of poetry consisting of 36 poems each,

Mimosusogawa-uta-ai and *Miyakawa-uta-ai*, to the *Naigu* (The Innermost Sanctuary) and *Gegu* (The Outermost Sanctuary) of the *Jingu* (The Ise Grand Shrine), respectively, to express his deep respect to *Jingu*.

The Heike-monogatari (The Tale of the House of Taira) is a unique piece in the history of Japanese literature in describing the armed conflicts between the Minamoto and Taira families which divided the nation at that time and in doing so this work amalgamated a Buddhist view of impermanence and indigenous Shintoist thoughts of reposing of souls of the war dead as an underlying current. The coexistence of Shinto and Buddhism created a major harmony in the shaping of our national character and resulted in unique spirits and culture.

The cause of such a coexistence and harmony between Shinto and Buddhism is found in the natural environment and cultural climate of the Japanese people who place emphasis on *wawo-toutobu* (respect peace and harmony). Prince Shotoku, the son of the above cited Emperor of Yomei, specifically provided for this in the 17-Article Constitution by proclaiming "Precious are peace and harmony," and warned about the rampant conflicts between tribes.

Further along in the myth of our nation building, Emperor Jinmu, the first human emperor, unified the country which had been divided into several small countries. Upon unification, the Emperor showed the ideal of *hakko-ichiu*, which means that many countries or people will live harmoniously as a big family. Prior to this an older "Myth of the Ear of Rice" says that two *kami*, *Izanagi-no-mikoto* and *Izanami-no-mikoto* gave birth to this nation and the Sun Goddess *Amaterasu-oomikami* sent her grandson *Ninigi-no-mikoto* to rule the nation. The myth says that *Ninigi-no-mikoto* descended from *Takamaga-hara* to the earth (Takachiho Mountain Peak in Hyuga Province) with the ears of rice. The Sun Goddess *Amaterasu* and her descendant *kami* (ancestry of the current Imperial family) promised life and happiness of the Japanese people and spread rice and rice cultivation throughout the nation. In other words, Japan was born as a nation with an ideal to realize a welfare state centered on rice cultivation. The Japanese people's center of unity is the Imperial family and Japanese people have been celebrating *Kami of the Ear of Rice* on the basis that rice is the foundation of people's life and the power of villages and the nation as a whole. The creation of harmonious interdependence through recognition among different tribes, provinces and villages of a common source of life meant the creation of the lineage of *kami* symbolizing the linkage among *kami*, humans and even many things in nature which originates in one life. In this rice cultivation based agrarian society, many natural conditions and their blessings provided a foundation. Rice cultivation requires collaboration among villagers and gathering of talents of people depending on each individual's capabilities.

It is thought that from time immemorial ancestors of human beings prayed for transcendental, great and absolute existence or for natural blessings to support people's lives with a deep sense of awe and impression. Existence and its interpretations have varied by tribes and regions and thus developed into different religions and their teachings. We are aware that each individual religion to which one belongs and its dogma are absolutely inviolable. However, in past history this sense of absolute inviolability often created a self-righteous and exclusive cultural climate which prohibited other religions. Man cannot live alone, and this world is not just for one or for one generation. This is a world in which every being will remain permanently interdependent and thus is meant to be harmoniously coexistent and prosperous. Japanese people's view of after death says that souls of the dead continue to live with people

who are still alive. This view requires tolerance which allows understanding and pluralistic values of others and other religions. Without love, mercy and sincerity tolerance cannot be born or grow. Shinto which preaches *Kan'nagara-no-michi* (kami's way) has a broad-minded and humble religious climate. Men and women of Shinto have a platform to contribute to the world and pray for the harmonious and prosperous coexistence of mankind as *Kami's Mikoto-mochi* (bestowed with a mission by kami). A Chinese proverb says "Seeking for the same through existence of differences." Religions of the world have their suitable individual characteristics and missions. I am not in favor of painting one color over all of them.

Many historians point out that one of the reasons why the ancient Roman Empire was able to enjoy prosperity for so long was its tolerance of religions. In the 18th Century, Friedrich the Great, the then King of Prussia said, "All religions must be treated with tolerance. Each man should be allowed to seek for happiness of mind in his own ways." Under the reign of King Friedrich this small nation Prussia is said to have enjoyed great prosperity. In Shinto ceremonies, many young people of different religions and sects together carry sacred palanquins which have a large poster writing, *tenka-taihei gokoku-hoojoo* (Prayer for peace under heaven and for a rich harvest of five cereals). Here, I believe, is a cause of the harmony and vitality of Japanese society. Religion has the profoundest influence on human beings and therefore the greatest unhappiness would emerge if religions confront each other. In order to overcome problems of contemporary civilization suffering from large scale wars and destruction of the global environment, the only way available for us is to have every religion in the world return to its origin and devote its energy to developing a spiritual civilization.

The Emperor Showa whom Japanese love and respect read a poem:

"Ametsuchi-no Kami-nizo-inoru asanagi-no umi-no-gotokuni nami tatanu yo-o." (the 8th year of Showa)

(I pray for all heavenly and earthly kami to give us a world of peace like the morning quiet of the sea. 1933)

Rumor has it that at one time after WW-II the emperor said, "True peace is not the state of lack of wars among nations. I figure peace means harmony among nations."

Even though today's Japan has many problems, I hope the participants in this deliberation taking place in Kyoto, an ancient capital of many shrine and temples, will find some hints of the theme of today.

Learning the Basic Principles of Religion

Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma
Professor, Department of Sanskrit
Patna University



I

Ever since the advent of human beings on this earth there has been a struggle to survive and dominate. In course of time, some peaceful means of survival were discovered by some more elevated people and thus came the concept of moral order. According to the *Rgveda*, moral order called *Rta* is the ultimate principle ensuring existence as such. This *Rta* developed into religion which is primarily a way of life. It is the name for one's total conscious attitude towards life and it is formed and enlightened by rational awareness and knowledge.

Religion is not separable from science which, in its narrower sense is an integral and indispensable factor of religion, and when viewed from the wider sense, that includes philosophy, science is almost identical with religion. From this view held by most modern thinkers we can draw the conclusion that in every step of the progress of civilization, there is need of these three intellectual aspects — philosophy, science and religion.

Their mutual relation is interesting as science takes shape in the womb of philosophy and matures in the form of religion. But in some sectors we see that science has released itself from the two, whereas in some others, the two have eclipsed science. This is not a healthy sign of progress. Anyway the three have to accept man as the ultimate goal of their pursuits. Religion shows the way of his life; science brings comforts, and philosophy satisfies intellectual needs.

II

In the modern world of conflict and divisive force gaining ground everywhere, the belief in the Vedantic concept of human being as the supreme in essence (*jīvo brahmaiva nāparah*) may help in solving all problems for ever. As noted above, every thinking process and practice is ultimately meant for the benefit of human life. It is the center of all mental and physical endeavor. The human being is not an individual but a spark of the supreme, that is, not different from the latter.

Swami Vivekananda, the most reverend vedantist of the modern age, said, "Each soul is potentially Divine; the goal is to manifest this Divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or by all of these, and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines and dogmas, churches and temples, rituals and forms, are but secondary details."

III

Human life is but a playground of God, not to be discarded or ignored as insignificant in any case. In the practical world, society for its own benefit must provide proper education for all, eradicate poverty,

ensure suitable jobs to all in order that they may manifest their inherent potency, and finally initiate everyone to spiritual values of life. Thus the material and spiritual existence of life will be fruitful for the entire world as such. This is in tune with the Hindu ideals of life, which is both catholic and democratic in nature.

This is necessary to safeguard world peace. Unless every individual on the earth is entrusted with this optimistic side of life to be fruitful to the common cause of the world, we shall be mere dreamers of world peace. Hence a man has to be seen with a sense of respect wherever he may be and his evils have to be rectified with peaceful, not stringent, means. His potentiality has to be explored with the latest technique and psychology, applying vocational guidance. The human being must be taught to work. He has to adopt the system of *āśrama* (proper labour). I am pleased to know that Japan, after World War II almost crippled her, recovered in no time, taking recourse in the principle of, the dignity of man and labour along with a sense of patriotism. But that is not the situation in under-developed countries. Therefore there is need for reshaping prevalent views towards man and life.

IV

In order to make man's life completely harmonious, every religion has to come to a common programme and contribute its share of thought. Every religion has some basic principles acceptable to others as well. The ethics of Hinduism called *mahāvratā* by Jainas and *yama* by Patanjali, the author of the Yoga-sutra, is summarized in five aspects of conduct, namely *ahiṃsā* (harmlessness), *satya* (truth or honesty), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacarya* (control of evil desires) and *aparigraha* (non-hoarding). Like *pañca-śīla* of Buddhism, such ethical tenets are accepted in Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism and others. These are sufficient to shape the life man in absolute harmony, which is his basic right in the world. Mahatma Gandhi properly emphasised these virtues for bringing harmony in life.

The difference between man and man is artificial, being caused by superficial conditions of caste, creed, race, religion and the like. In the modern world of reason and technical progress these conditions must come to an end. The ideal was long forecast by the upanisadic seers who, at the very outset of preaching, chanted with their disciples:

"Saha nāv avatu, saha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryam karavāmahai, tejasvi nāv adhītamastu, mā vidviṣāmahai."

Let this knowledge protect us both, let it pervade us, we both shall attain strength, our study will shine, and finally let there be no hatred between us.

There is also a potent view of doing good to all creatures in the oft-quoted verse: *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah* (let all be happy), *sarve santu nirāmayāḥ* (let all be free from disease); *sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantu* (let everyone find comforts like house, son, wealth etc.) and *mā kaścid duḥkhabhāg bhavet* (none should suffer). This was the ideal of the Bodhisattva who promised: "I do not like to acquire an empire, nor do I want to get to heaven; salvation is not my aim. I only crave for putting an end to the sufferings of miserable ones." This ideal should be adopted by all deserving people, especially the affluent ones.

V

Life is a continuous process. The past is buried in the present and the present is reformed by the future. In this process, sometimes the evils dominate and the good is crushed. But saints and prophets and

sometimes the Almighty Himself rectifies the disharmonious state of affairs in life, if there is emergency. Then alone the good in human life raises its head to show the path of love, compassion, benevolence and virtues. These are not imposed from outside; these are but inherent in man, being the functioning of the right brain. It needs only inspiration. Hence it is clear that harmony of life is inner-oriented and caused within the human mind. Some concrete proposals for inspiring the sleeping soul are given in the Upanisads as "*uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata, prāpya varān nibodhata*" that is, awake, arise and make endeavour untill the goal is reached. The Buddhist teaching of "*āmadīpo bhava*" is a similar proposal of internal inspiration.

To conclude this short speech I may be allowed to quote a couple of verses from the closing hymn of the R̥gveda laying emphasis on unitedness:

Saṁ-gacchadhvaṁ saṁ-vadadhvaṁ / saṁ vo ma nāṁsi jānātam !

Devā bhāgaṁ yathā pūrve / saṁ-jānānā upāsate !!

In harmony shall you go, in harmony shall you speak,
In harmony shall your minds apprehend;
So the shining gods in ancient times.
With united hearts achieved their end.

Samānī va ākūtiḥ / samānā hṛdayāni vah !

Samānam astu vo mano / yathā vaḥ susahāsati !!

United be your will, united be your hearts;
United be your thoughts, so you all perfectly united be.

Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ



Combining our Strength

Mr. Tully Spotted Eagle Boy
President of Mother Earth Lodge
Medicine Man, Mic Mac Nation of Canada



It is an honor to be here today to represent Canada — and also for my people, the indigenous people — and on behalf of Chief in Council of Mic Mac, our first Nation. We are here today to discuss world peace. My topic is unity. I hear each and every one of you speak very, very beautifully. My big honor is to hear you speak such beautiful language. The creator, God, Almighty, the Supreme Being, the Supreme Spirit gave each and every one of us a duty to do. It's a big job. But today I see all the religious spiritual people are here. And what makes me happy as I am sitting here looking towards all of you, is to see who you brought with you. You have brought your ancestors. And they are sitting in the middle right here. You have brought your spirits. And they are listening to your words. They are guiding you. They are guiding me. We have a tremendous work ahead of us. We have to teach our children who all will be the next leaders; the generation to come. We have to show our example to them.

But what made an impression on my mind, or on my heart, or on my spirit, is what I saw sitting and listening to the beautiful people at speech. You spoke of uniting together, and doing good work together; joining our forces together; joining our spirits in a good way to be able to pray for people who are suffering, for people who are lost, for people who need our help.

This is the way our culture as native people brings about unity. I would like to ask you as spiritual leaders, spiritual people, to experience the significance of this, of bringing people together to join hands. Let's make a circle, and unite, and we will mend the sacred hoop of all people, of all religions in the world. So let's do it.

I will say a prayer and talk about a powerful energy that will search through you, through your bodies, through your spirit. This is what you call mending the sacred hoop. This is for world peace. This is for love. People out there, you want to join in? Come on, be part of this blessing, because it's a wonderful way of putting our energies together; mending the sacred hoop. I will say a prayer in my language, and I don't think we have an interpreter for it here, but that's the beauty of it. But the Great Spirit, God Almighty, Lord Jesus Christ, the Buddha or all the religious spiritual leaders will understand because it comes from the heart. So call upon your spirits, call upon your great God. Let them enter your hearts. Let us join forces together.

(A prayer in the native language)

I ask the Great Spirit to bless every and each one of you to have the gift and power that God, the Great Spirit or your God, has given you to help your people, my people, their people, all the children in the world, the animals, also our mother the earth. She is crying for our help. We will also not forget her. So the power of the Great Spirit is now in every one of us here today as we join forces, join hands together

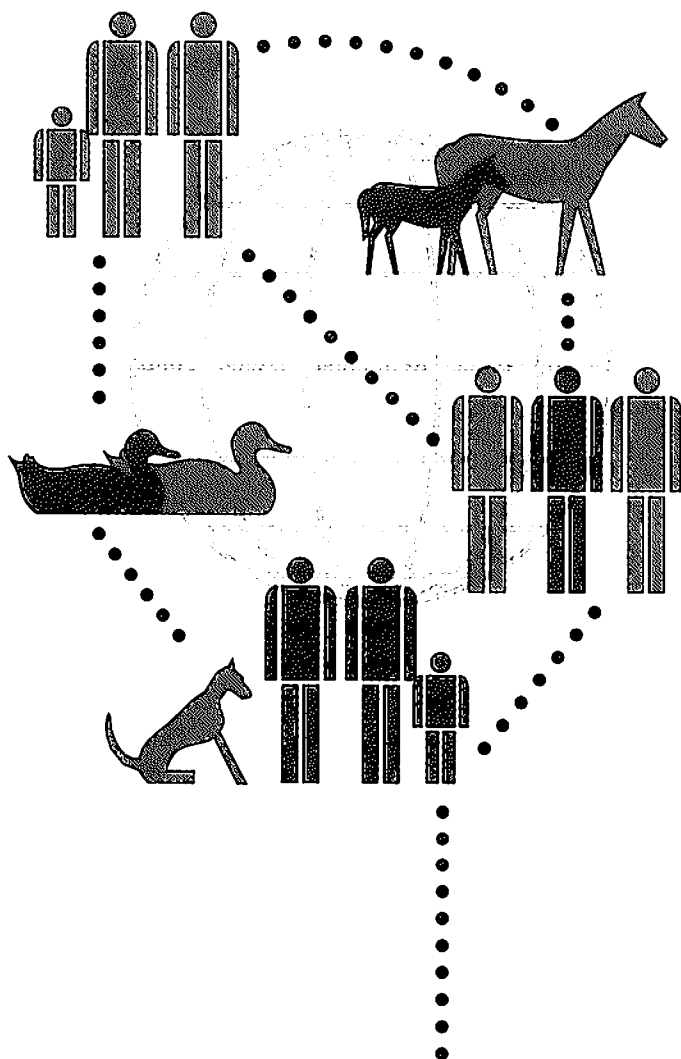
as we mend the sacred hoop. I will sing an honor song.

(A song in the native language)

By the power of the Great Spirit, by the power of you people, spiritual leaders, we all have very important work to do. We also as spiritual people, spiritual leaders must, I repeat, must work together even, at times when we may have spiritual wars amongst each other. And we must remember that war is not needed. But we must work together. We must let the people know that our children, our next generation, will be the leaders, and we must teach them properly. This is the message from the God, Great Spirit, and you all. We all know this.

Love to you all.

(transcribed from a recording of the actual speech)



Theme 4 Religiously Based Contributions to Society

Islam Wants Peace for All

H. E. Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro
Grand Mufti of Syria



In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful,
Praise be to the Lord of the worlds and Peace and Blessings be on the Prophet Muhammad, on his brother Prophets and Messengers, and on their households and followers to the Days of Judgment.

I am deeply honored and grateful for having been invited by the organizers of this Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei for Prayer and Peace.

To the religious leaders who have responded to this invitation, I greet you all as my brothers. I'm very happy for this opportunity to discuss with you the concerns of humanity in the 21st century.

I have been asked to talk to you about "Religiously Based Contributions to Society." These contributions reach several levels of society, the family, the nation or country and then the global society.

On the level of the family, I believe that the single most important function of religion is to raise the human being to have good moral character, so he will readily sacrifice for his family, his community and his society. This can't be accomplished unless the individual believes in God, the Creator, who granted him hearing, sight, reason and a compassionate, understanding heart. Man's heart enables him to know his Creator through the countless manifestations that surround him. He is being ordered by God to purify his heart through prayer five times a day and constant remembrance of Him. Through meditation and the remembrance of God he draws nearer to Him. Thus, he becomes like the angels who harbor no evil, envy, malice, greediness, arrogance or egotism. A true believer loves for others what he loves for himself, or even prefers others to himself, while being content to go to bed hungry so as to feed others.

I believe that unless peace is achieved between the individual and his Lord, there will be no peace between him and others. Hence, this individual will live in evil and vice. He will be suspicious and afraid of his fellow human beings more than he fears the beasts of the jungle. He will be afraid only of police and jails and when the sword of law is absent, then corruption and oppression will fill the earth.

For these reasons God sent the Prophets and Messengers and made them examples of purity, holiness and cognizance. He sent them to mankind as models of proper behavior. He provided them with his

books and messages to teach the human being and to enable Him to attain through the shortest ways physical and spiritual happiness in the here and hereafter.

In addition, Islam also raises the husband and wife to assume the responsibility of caring for each other, for their children, relatives and neighbors, with all love and sacrifice. The children are enjoined to be dutiful and merciful to their parents, especially when they grow old. Prophet Muhammad says that on the Day of Judgment a person invokes the mercy of Allah, who will ask him "Have you been merciful to anyone on earth, even to a sparrow bird, so I can have mercy on you today?" The mission of Muhammad is to extend mercy to all, so that global peace will pervade the earth. Allah says in the Quran addressing the Prophet Muhammad: "We have not sent you except as a mercy for the worlds." (T.Q. Sura #21, Prophets Chapter, Verse 107)

Prophet Muhammad condemns any person who goes to bed with a full stomach knowing that his neighbor is hungry. He even excludes him from the circle of believers. We understand from this prophetic teaching that since the earth has almost become a global village, it is the duty of each individual, society, country or world organization to care for and feed every poor and needy person of our neighbors in this village.

Allah says in the Quran: "Serve God, and join not any partners with Him: and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer and what your right hands possess: for God loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious." (T.Q. Sura #4, Women Chapter, verse 36)

Islam liberated the woman from the tyranny of the man and gave her the freedom to defend her rights. It made her the victor even if she was alone and the parliamentary majority was against her.

The prophet prohibited adultery or fornication, so as to preserve the rights of the woman. It is forbidden for her to sell her body to men whether they be single or married. This is a barrier that disintegrates the sanctity of marriage and the matrimonial ties, thus causing the children and families to become loose in their morals. In addition, it spreads sexually transmitted diseases, for some of which there is no known cure.

Islam cares for children and childhood. In Paradise there is a House of Joy which will be entered only by those who make children joyous. Islam does not even allow the governor or ruler to pass over a child and take his turn.

On the level of the community the prophet utilized its members to work cooperatively and collaboratively for the sake of their society. Prophet Muhammad says: "The hand of God is with the community or society." The tie that binds human beings together, thus becomes knowledge, wisdom and morality.

The advancement of modern day society is measured by its scientific knowledge and technology. Islam orders the Muslim to seek knowledge ceaselessly, from the cradle to the grave. It does not stop at the acquisition of religious sciences, but includes all useful sciences. It even requires that we travel throughout the earth to find it. Prophet Muhammad says: "Seek knowledge even if it is in China." If he

had been alive today he would have also added, even if it is in Tokyo, London, Paris, New York, etc.

Islam goes a step further and imposes on the learned the responsibility to teach others free of charge. The learned are also threatened with retribution [Y.1]from God if they do not teach others. Prophet Muhammad elevates the scholars to a very high rank. He says that the best of people, next to the prophets, is a person who has learned something and teaches it to others, i.e. he does not monopolize knowledge. At the same time, Islam urges the ignorant person to seek knowledge, and he is also threatened with punishment if he fails to do so.

A Muslim must not be lazy or idle. He has to earn his living in a lawful way and spend on himself and his family. He should not wait for assistance from others. The Prophet Muhammad says: "The higher giving hand is better than the lower taking one."

Islam forbids the Muslim to be a source of harm to others, whether by his hand or tongue. It forbids him from theft and to gain money illicitly through aggression.

Thus, the Muslims were like angels walking the face of the earth. Judges and justices resigned their posts when year after year would pass without anyone coming to them for litigation. Security and peace prevailed so that there was no need for police or jails. If a Muslim did any wrong without being seen, he would become his own judge and incriminate himself.

He would become the policeman and execute the law on himself. You could see him coming to the Prophet Muhammad asking to be punished because he had committed adultery, or betrayed his trust, or insulted someone, as did the ruler of the city of Homs. He came to the Caliph Omar and asked him to allow him to resign his post because he had insulted a non-Muslim citizen of his community.

Islam urges the rich and well-off to provide for the poor and needy. They should build hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly and handicapped. Islam makes it incumbent on them to find jobs for the unemployed and even persuade them to finance poor young men to get married and establish virtuous families. Islam enjoins on them to pay yearly, 2.5% of their capital and profit even more for these good causes, which it calls "*Zakat*".

On the level of the nation or country, Islam calls for the care of human rights. It guarantees education for all as well as jobs. If someone becomes unemployed it is the duty of the state to pay him benefits until he has found a job. If he is incapable of paying back his debts, be he a Muslim or non-Muslim, the state will pay it for him. Islam bans all sorts of racial, ethnic, religious, color or gender discrimination. Muhammad guaranteed justice and equality for all and he elevated the application of justice to such a high level that no one before him or after him has been able to attain it.

Once he gave a stick to a man who he had beaten on the chest with, when he was exhorting his followers to stand in straight rows. He told the man to retaliate and beat him. When the man told him that he had beaten him on his bare chest, the Prophet uncovered his chest to be beaten. Instead, the man threw the stick away and hugged the prophet and kissed him saying, he would sacrifice everything for his sake.

In order to establish a sound and healthy society, operating on truth and sincerity, Islam forbids people to be coerced or forced to follow a particular doctrine. Freedom of thought and freedom of belief is protected and respected in a Muslim society. The Quran advocated the freedom of choice when it says: "Whoever wills can believe and whoever wills can disbelieve." (T.Q. Sura #18, Cave Chapter, verse 29)

Islam condemns fanaticism, extremism and excessiveness. It advocates moderation in everything, even in eating, drinking and even in acts of worship.

Islam forbids the Muslim to approach intoxicants or narcotics, so as not to become a victim of them. Thus, the individual and the society will be healthy, physically, intellectually and spiritually.

Islam calls each responsible person, whether a father, mother, teacher or a ruler to shun oppression and work towards the development of a society based on justice and benevolence. A society which oppresses its people is sure to collapse. Prophet Muhammad considered one hour of justice better than 60 years of worship.

On the level of the global society, the Prophet Muhammad confirmed the fraternity of all humans and said: "Man is the brother of his fellowmen whether he likes it or not." He used to say at the end of each prayer: "O God, I bear witness that all your servants are brothers and sisters."

Islam does not stop there. It even calls for the care of animals. It tells of a woman who was punished in the hellfire because she had locked a cat in and did not feed it, nor let it find its own food. God even forgave a sinful woman because she had given water to a thirsty dog.

Islam calls for the care of trees in order to create a green and clean environment. It says even if it is the Day of Resurrection, plant a tree. It does not allow people to throw filth under trees and into rivers, so as not to fill the earth with waste and pollution.

Islam demands that peace be spread among all people. If a conflict erupts between two parties or states, they are called upon to reconcile their differences. War is not allowed to breakout, and we should not stand doing nothing about a dispute. We have to act as intercessors to establish rightful justice and fairness.

In conclusion, a serious study could be made of the law of heaven, which calls for belief in all the Prophets and Messengers of God. In the light of wise and rational reason this knowledge would be a blessing to the people of the 21st century. Peace and the gifts from heaven will enable humans to live in fraternity without judges, police or jails. They will enjoy progress, prosperity and affluence.

I believe that if a committee of rational and impartial religious leaders, such as are gathered here, were to study Islam, which carries high the banners of the Prophets and Messengers of God, it will find that the message of heaven is to construct the individual, the family, the society, and the whole world on virtue, fraternity, compassion and love.

We all know that billions of dollars are being spent to explore the moon, or Mars. Is it possible that an exploratory journey could be made into the gifts of religion, a journey led by specialists who adore

peace and humanity?

I am fully confident that treasures will be discovered that will give happiness to humans not only on earth but will accompany them and make them happy when they move to the spiritual world in heaven. It will also be highly recommended that the media participate in this joint human endeavor, which is celestial and terrestrial. They can contribute by investing in space channels with programming that calls for benevolence, wisdom, knowledge, morality and purification of the soul from its shortcomings, and adorning it with perfection. Our beloved earth will become a paradise of joy and happiness before we move to the real Paradise in Heaven. Praise be to Allah and the Lord of the worlds, and Peace be upon you all, and thank you.

Toward a World Community based on the Spirit of Assisi

The Most Rev. Fr. Agostino Gardin, OFMConv.
Minister General of Order of Friars Minor Conventual



What can religions offer society at this particular time in history, on the threshold of the third millennium? Are they really in a position to help build a better society? And what positive contributions can they make?

I am linking these questions with the subject I have been asked to deal with in my short intervention. They are extremely important for all believers and for their responsibility in the history of the human race. And perhaps they are also questions of interest to non-believers.

I could, in a general way, list the many possible contributions which religions could make to today's society: from matters of peace to the defense of human rights, for instance, or from problems of hunger in the world and the distribution of goods around it to the protection of all creation. But I would rather focus attention on an aspect of the matter which I think goes to the root of the answers to the questions I asked at the start. I speak from my own point of view as a believing Catholic Christian, spiritual son of the famous Christian, Francis of Assisi. (Here I should like to recall that it was in his city, from which I symbolically come and which I symbolically represent, that on October 26, 1986, Pope John Paul II invited representatives of the world religions, and Christians to pray for world peace.)

First of all, I should ask to what society (or what societies) religious people can — or rather should — make this contribution. A full description of the characteristics of present-day society must be rather broadly based, if it is to be complete, so I will confine myself to some basic points, taking my words from an important text of the Catholic Church:

The word of today is showing both its strength and weakness, the capacity to produce the best and the

worst as it faces the road leading to freedom or to slavery, advance or retreat, fellowship or hatred. Men and women are becoming conscious of having to give direction to the powers which they have created, which can either enslave or serve them, and as a result are questioning themselves. (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, n.9)

In spite of the obvious advances made in many societies, we cannot fail to notice that there are still many, often serious, upheavals in the social order. Well, we Christians acknowledge that they are partly the result of weak or questionable economic, political and social structures; but — to hark back to the text I quoted — we are sure that, at a deeper level, these difficult or unhappy situations "originate in the pride and selfishness of men and women which also perverts the social environment." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.25)

So it is at this level that religion is asked to make its real contribution and it is here that the decision to give society well-considered political, social, juridical, etc., structures or arrangements comes from moral attitudes and choices. We can use various categories — cultural, economic, juridical — to explain social upheaval, and in particular social injustices. But the root of them all is often moral, and goes back to the moral choices of those who work in society.

May I, in this context, quote a letter from Pope John Paul II, who gave life to the "Spirit of Assisi", that spirit which inspired these meetings at Mount Hiei (Kyoto) and which as a spiritual son of Saint Francis of Assisi, I am to some extent here to recall. In 1987 John Paul II wrote of the present social situation.

"One can certainly speak of 'selfishness' and of 'short-sightedness' of 'mistaken political calculations' and 'imprudent economic decisions'. And in each of these evaluations one hears an echo of an ethnlcal and moral nature. Man's condition is such that a more profound analysis of an individual's actions and omissions cannot be achieved without implying, in one way or another, judgements or references of an ethnlcal nature."(*Sollicitudo rei socialis* 1987, n.36)

So it is on the moral level that religion, or faith, can and should contribute most importantly to the building of a more just, more peaceful society, one which cares more for the needs and dignity of the human person. Indeed, moral attitudes — above all these basic choices which take a global view of people's lives, and therefore also of the way they can live together — find, for the believer, their decisive justification, their deepest roots and the broadest possible horizon for understanding them, in faith. Religion, in fact, offers the believer fundamental replies to the fundamental questions: the meaning of life and the significance of the profoundest human experiences, among them moral experience: that is, the capacity to distinguish between good and evil and, as a result, the fundamental decision to do the good and reject evil.

To sum up what I have said: the positive building up of society is necessarily based on positive moral values; these find their strongest roots in a religious view of life. Religion urges us to take on these values, to grow in understanding of them and to follow them with determination.

What are these values ?

I will express them in a single word, which for the Christian is a synthesis of all values. It is indeed the

central message of our religion. The word is love. For the Christian, it is the boundless love of God for me, the love which man is called upon to offer to others, especially the poorest; it is the reality, the gift, and at the same time the most important task of human life. At the heart of the Gospel (the story of how the Son of God became man to express the completeness of God's love) are the words of Jesus Christ: "love one another, as I have loved you." And the little, poor, humble Francis of Assisi continues to be admired around the world by so many, including non-Christians, simply because he was guided in his life by the fundamental choice of love, love in every situation, love of everyone.

Of course, a society built on love seems like an impossible dream. Well, religion must help this dream to come as close as possible to reality.

We, religious men and women, must put all our energies into a society based on love. Love which, in the various fields or situations in which societies express themselves, will show itself above all injustice and peace, in the wish to remove the causes of ethnic conflict or any other sort of conflict, in respect for the dignity of the person and for fundamental human rights, in tolerance, in the fair distribution of goods, in solidarity with one another, and in care for the poorest.

From the city of St. Francis I bring a wish that these meetings at Mount Hiei (Kyoto) may help to increase, in people of all religions — in the spirit of Assisi — the will to build, patiently and yet boldly, a civilization of love.

(Translation into English by Ms. Isabel Quingley)

May All People Become Religious

The Rev. Takahito Miki

Vice Director

Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan

Patriarch of the Church of Perfect Liberty



Shin Shuren, or the "Federation of New Religious Organization of Japan", has four slogans. They are "Freedom of Faith," "Separation of Politics and Religion," Religious Cooperation," and "Faith for Every Citizen." Today I would like to briefly explain them to you.

The first slogan "Freedom of Faith" refers to the freedom that is not restricted by person nor in particular by any government. It is also the freedom to practice what you believe in and the freedom to teach your faith. This freedom in turn means that those who do not wish to have faith against their will have also the right to do so. This slogan clearly states that freedom of faith is protected and guaranteed by including the freedom of having faith and freedom of not having any faith.

"Separation of Politics and Religion" is the second slogan. This means that the government will never give any privileges to any particular religious organization and at the same time no religious

organization shall seek any benefits from government and politics. This independence is respected and guaranteed between politics and religion.

There is a historical reason why the two slogans are included among the *Shin Shuren* slogans. The official name of *Shin Shuren*, in the Japanese Language is "*Shin Nippon Shukyo Dantai Rengokai*", or "Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan" in English. This name can be interpreted as "federation of new religions". Yet the truth is that the adjective "new" modifies "Japan", which means that "the federation of religious organizations" stands for "the newly reborn Japan" or "the New Japan."

Shin Shuren was formed in 1951, after World War II. The two slogans are based on the reflection in the present Constitution that politics made use of religion in pre-war Japan. It also reflects that human rights which had been guaranteed by the former constitution were largely neglected before World War II. The present Japanese Constitution proclaims both "freedom of faith" and "separation of politics and religion." But we must keep in mind that unless we continue to assert these rights, these rights are in danger of being restricted and such restrictions would result in a violation of the Constitution. Tendencies toward restrictions have happened before and may happen in the future, too. That is why we continue to maintain the importance of the slogans.

The third slogan states "Religious Cooperation." This slogan asks for understanding and cooperation among all religious groups regardless of their sects, domestic and abroad, so that all religious organizations may work towards a common goal of world peace and the happiness of humankind. This slogan clearly matches the objectives of this Religious Summit Meeting.

The last slogan is "Faith for Every Citizen." According to past surveys carried out in Japan on the level of religiosity of the Japanese the ratio of Japanese people who have faith and those who show interest in or are concerned with religion is very low. This slogan is therefore included in *Shin Shuren* because we hope that every human being will have faith. We ask that those who already have faith to deepen their faith. These efforts, I believe, will enable the world to become closer to the realization of world peace.

On this occasion I would like to talk about this fourth slogan "Faith for Every Citizen" and the theme of today's meeting: "Contribution to Society Based on Religion."

There are various worldwide problems facing us today: poverty, discrimination, terrorism, environmental destruction, to name only a few. I would like to show my deepest appreciation to the courageous people who have faced and tried to solve those problems. I am also grateful to the organizations at the United Nations, individual governments, NGOs, and the countless individuals who have volunteered to solve these problems. I'm afraid though, it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that there is little hope that these problems will all be solved within this century. Yet that is the very reason we, as religionists, must help and support those people who are striving to solve these problems. This support can be a great contribution to society for the present as well as the coming century. The current situation of the world offers little hope for solution of these problems.

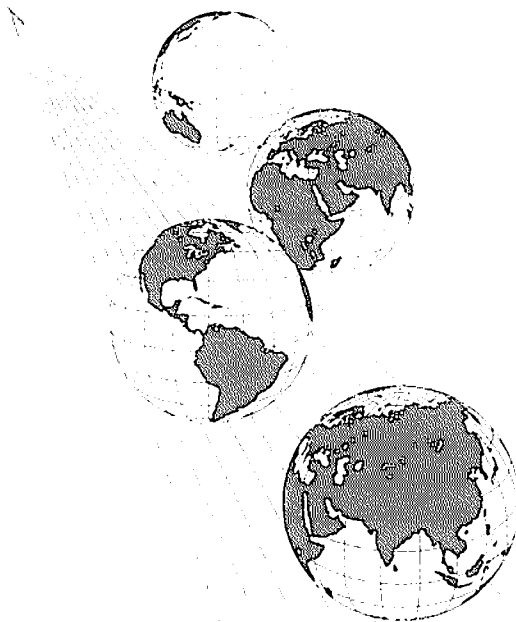
These contributions cannot be carried out only by religion, and at the same time we must admit there are problems in some cases that religion cannot solve. We also have to keep in mind that those problems may be solved within the twenty-first century. We can also say that there are solutions which

only religionists can solve. I would like to examine today's theme, "Contribution to the Society Based on Religion" in the twenty-first century from this point of view. I would like to point out some of the aspects of this contribution.

It is true that direct solutions based on politics and economics are vital, but there are contributions that religionists can make to society. This contribution comes in the form of sharing faith and hope, as well as assisting those who already have faith to deepen their conviction. Such contributions are what society seeks from religionists.

In order to fulfill these objectives, it would be best in a direct sense, that each religion practice and spread its own religious beliefs. "The religious mind" can be attained without taking the form of or belonging to particular sect. It may seem indirect to increase the number of those who have faith without belonging to a particular sect. It may seem like a slow process at first glance, but this I feel would be the best contribution to bring about world peace.

Religion cannot be forced upon an individual. Nevertheless, through "our prayers" and through "our religious minds," we will be able to increase the number of individuals who have faith at heart. I believe that this is what religionists must/can essentially and ultimately do to contribute to society.



Message of the Young for Unity of the Focolare Movement

We are very happy to be able to be here today on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Summit of Religious Leaders to Pray for Peace held here in Mt. Hiei in 1987. A group representing the Young for Unity of the Focolare Movement participated in that great event, reading a message signed by 150,000 young people from around the world.

Today we are here again, from various countries of Asia, representing many young people spread over five continents of every race, culture, and religion who want to commit themselves to living for a more united world.

During these past 10 years, various initiatives have taken place at the local and world level in order to spread to young people of our age a new way of thinking that makes it possible for the world to have true peace. For this purpose we have tried concretely to overcome the divisions in our families, in our schools and among the various generations and to eliminate the barriers and prejudices which separate people.

This year, in May, we met in Rome with more than 8,000 boys and girls of our age from every part of the world for the Super Congress '97. In this big meeting we were able to share our experiences and to express our hope that we can build a world in which people and nations respect and love one another. On that occasion a part of the program was broadcasted via satellite. Through the cooperation of many national and regional television companies, a great number of young people in all parts of the world, from Brazil to Australia, from Korea to the United States and Africa, were simultaneously able to share in this special moment of unity and hope for the world of tomorrow.

The meeting ended with a pact of unity, a pact of mutual love. We declared to one another that we would love each other to the point of being ready to give our lives if necessary. We know that this is the measure of true love, as shown to us by Jesus Christ, who said to his disciples before offering his life for all of us on the cross, "Love one another as I have loved you."

We often hear it said that in the past people were happier, even though they had fewer things and lived in a simpler way. Today, despite progress, prosperity, new technology and the means of communication, we see that many people are alone and sad, to the point that some even take their own lives. Even if materially they are richer, their hearts have become poorer because they lack a more profound vision of life. We of the Young for Unity would like to try to bring happiness to everyone. In order to do this, we follow the way of love. Many people think that if they have more, if they buy newer or more expensive things, they will be happier. We, however, know that the secret of happiness lies not in having but in giving. We would like this new "culture of giving," as we call it, to become the new way of thinking for the world of the 21st century.

We, together with children, young people, and adults of every country and language, believe that a "different world" is possible; a world where all are considered brothers and sisters, because we have understood that we are all sons and daughters of the same Father, God; a world based not on competition or on the oppression of the weak, but a world in which we support each other and help each other, and where the word "enemy" is no longer used.

In front of all of you and with all of you, we commit ourselves to doing our part so that this world will become ever more a reality, and we pray that in this way everyone can experience what true peace really means.

Mount Hiei, August 4, 1997

Young for Unity of the Focolare Movement



FORUM

FORUM

On August 4th, the last day of the meeting at Kyoto International Conference Hall, NHK (a Japanese state-run broadcast station) held an open forum, entitled, "the Role of Religion in the 21st Century." The program was videotaped and aired on October 24, 1997. The five panelists representing different religions spoke before an audience of five hundred. The open forum was focused on three current global issues. The speakers, representing Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism, conveyed their views on the following three topics:

1. Reconciliation between peoples in disputes.
2. Religion and human rights.
3. Life Science and ethics.

Here are the points presented by the panelists:

Dr. Al-Obaide (Islam)

1. In Islam, a diligent lifestyle is essential for harmony; this applies directly to reconciliation between religions. This means that we are asked to live with the teachings of Allah, in which God asks for mutual understanding and harmony between neighbors.
2. A Muslim is assigned a duty in life. A Muslim is taught to live his or her life closer to the Prophet Muhammed's lifestyle. Islam regards mankind as one unit. Naturally, human rights must be protected in the name of Allah's justice.
3. Islam has greatly contributed to the progress of science and technology in human civilization. Science and technology are useful for the betterment of people's living conditions and the strengthening of their religious faith — not to alienate people from religion. Therefore, research work should be encouraged. We should, however, restrict or prohibit the development of technologies which would induce negative effects, for example, environmental destruction caused by technological innovations. Serious and deep consideration is necessary of new scientific discoveries and pioneering technologies. Theories of science and its implementation must be considered separately.

Dr. Ariarajah (Protestantism)

1. Religious reconciliation is to develop dialogue with established religious organizations of different traditions.
2. One of the essential roles of religion is to elevate people's consciousness regarding human dignity. We frequently witness examples of injustice triumphing over justice. Religions can help people become aware of this fact and empower them to do something about it. People of faith are responsible for mobilizing popular opinion against injustice. This is an important contribution to society that people of faith can make.
3. Scientists must make it a priority to do research for the good of the community rather than for one's own interests. Religion can help provide a standard value system in just such cases. Similarly, scientists are asked to take sole responsibility for the results of their own research and development projects. Excessive specialization of today's professional disciplines tends to restrict free communication between different fields. In this sense, science and technology must make further efforts to promote interdisciplinary dialogue between science, religion, and

the general public.

Cardinal Arinze (Catholicism)

1. Conflict is sometimes induced by an individual or a group who seeks selfish satisfaction, with no consideration of others. Religion can guide people to be aware of the rights of others, as well as one's own rights. We can achieve reconciliation between peoples if each one of us makes the effort to have religious faith, because religion encourages forgiveness and service to others whoever they are.
2. Humankind has inborn dignity. Every man and woman therefore should be respected as a person with dignity. Human beings are not the creators of the world but they are to maintain what God created. Therefore, no one should be allowed to waste or misuse resources. Particularly, today's population explosion causes various negative effects with regards to human rights. In this respect, one must take responsibility for equal sharing of bread with the people of the world. If we don't have enough bread on the table for the world family, we must produce or buy more bread to support each family member.
3. The Catholic Church cannot accept abortion or euthanasia, because these things are against God's will. God created the human as an intelligent being. Therefore development of science and technology is a result of God's grace. It also helps improve the human's quality of life, as long as it does not violate ethical or moral standards.

Dr. Rosen (Judaism)

1. Reconciliation is not merely a political issue, but is essential to humanity. Every religion embraces both the uniqueness of its own tradition and a universal nature. Although each person is unique, all humans share a common humanity. The human being was created in the Divine image. Therefore, humanity belongs to the divine sphere. Reconciliation is possible if we strengthen our humanity; namely, the universal nature that each religion embodies.
2. The Bible declares that humans were placed in "the garden" to work and preserve it. In other words, humanity has the responsibility to develop and protect the world. Humans must challenge various aspects of nature, but they are responsible for how their results are implemented. In this regard, religious discipline provides a positive role for that responsibility.
3. The Jewish view distinguishes between the therapeutic and the innovative. Therapeutic medical care is to establish a theory on how to cure diseases. The innovative science must aim at finding the therapy. Genetic engineering of any kind must be therapeutic. To delegate between the two, dialogue between religion and science is unavoidable. Where there is ethical purpose and direction to our lives, then knowledge, technology and its implementation are a true blessing.

Dr. Sharma (Hinduism)

1. Reconciliation between peoples can be realized if the parties in conflict stand on common ground. There are certain ethics that every religion teaches; for example, hurting others is bad and doing good to others is encouraged. The first step to reconciliation is to talk on the basis of such commonly acceptable ethics.
2. From ancient times Hindus have shown their religious respect for plants. Recently, however, such religious attitudes have been waning, primarily because plant species have decreased in direct

proportion to the world population increase. This example tells us that the population explosion may even cause a decline of religions. Furthermore, it may even serve to destroy human dignity, particularly in developing countries. Discrepancies between the rich and the poor cause discrimination and unequal sharing of resources.

3. Science and technology will continue to make further developments. In this respect religion has the important role to deal with the situation and to present another value: spiritual peace. Religion and science must cooperate with each other to contribute to society.



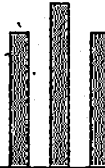
Ven. Sugitani (Buddhism)

1. Religion is the truth. It entirely depends on people, how they interpret and digest religious truth. People of different religions can understand each other if one can find the truth that every religion has in common. His Holiness the Pope valued the Buddhist Saicho's teaching, "forgetting oneself and benefiting others; that is the height of compassion." This is a good example of interreligious understanding.
2. To recognize other people's human rights one must first cultivate self-discipline and elevate his or her ethical standards. Recent examples of relief aid projects tend to be centered on material aid, but a more important aspect of that aid is the communication between donors and receivers. Buddhists believe that every living being has "Buddha nature," and humans consist of merely one small part of this earth. We must therefore learn how to control our selfish desire and to find satisfaction with the smallest of things.
3. Science and religion must coexist harmoniously. Life is a gift from God and Buddha. Medical science can help strengthen the life force given to each person. It is good to make use of human wisdom and intelligence for this purpose. However, Buddhists believe that men should not handle the creation of life, because it is a sacred domain. Science and religion need deeper communication and understanding for the harmonious living of all.

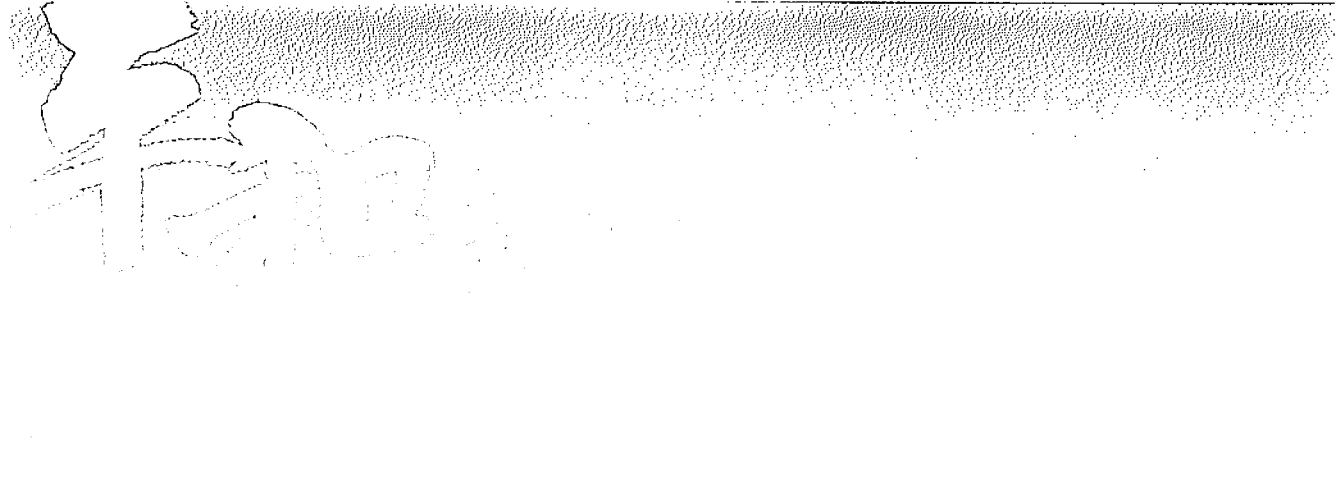
The coming of the new century will bring an era of cooperation and harmony, whereas the twentieth century was one of specialization and efficiency. We must find more harmonious relationships with neighbors, as well as with all the other living things on Earth. We need to learn common values that we can share. Then we will discover a new holistic worldview.

The Panelists (in the alphabetical order)

- Islam: Dr. Abdullah bin Saleh Al-Obaid (Secretary General, The Muslim World League)
- Protestantism: The Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah (Deputy General Secretary, World Council of Churches)
- Catholicism: Francis Cardinal Arinze (President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue)
- Judaism: Chief Rabbi Prof. David Rosen (Director, Interfaith Relations, Anti-defamation League)
- Hinduism: Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma (Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Patna University)
- Buddhism: The Ven. Gijun Sugitani (President, The Tendai Buddhist Denomination)
- Coordinator: Dr. Yasuo Kashiwakura (Professor, Kyoto University)



THE PRAYER CEREMONY



Ceremony of the Interreligious Prayer for World Peace

● Opening Remarks

The Rev. Tsunekiyo Tanaka, Vice General Secretary (Deputy Chief Priest of Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine)

● Bell for World Peace, Silent Prayer for Peace

● Greetings by the Sponsor

The Most. Ven. Eshin Watanabe, Honorary President (Tendai Zasu, Supreme Priest of the Tendai Buddhist Denomination)

● Prayers of World Religions

Buddhism: The Ven. Dharmapal Mahathera, The Most Ven. Gimo Inaba (Head Priest of Koyasan Shingon-shu)

Christianity: The Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah, The Rev. Tokuaki Iida (Representing the Anglican Church in Japan)

Sectarian Shinto: The Rev. Masatoku Yoshimura (Head Priest of Shinshu-kyo)

Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan: The Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto (President of the Myochi-kai Kyodan)

Association of Shinto Shrines: The Rev. Kazukiyo Sato (Head Priest of Matsuo Taisha)

Hinduism: Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma

Indigenous Religions: Mrs. Pauline E. Tangiora, J.P., Dr. Hum D. Bui, M.D.

Tenth Anniversary of The Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei

The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace

Aug. 4, 1997

Islam: Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro

Judaism: Chief Rabbi Prof. David Rosen

Sikhism: Maj. Gen. Sujan Singh Uban

Zoroastrianism: Dr. Homi Dhalla

Bahai: Dr. Foad Katirai

Interreligious Organizations : The Very Rev. James Parks Morton
WCRP Japan, Japan Religious Committee for World Federation,
Community of Saint Egidio, Focolare Movement, International
Association for Religious Freedom, World Conference on Religion
and Peace

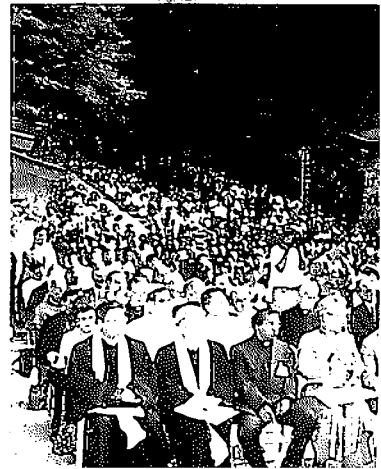
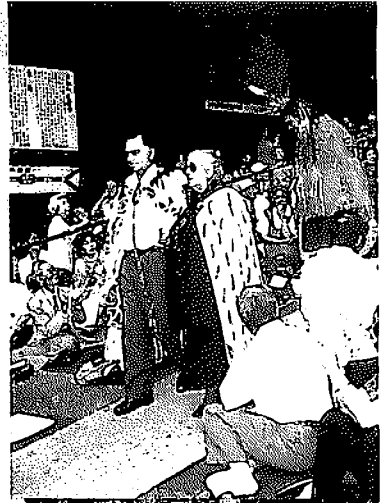
● Release of "A Message from Mt. Hiei"

Cardinal Seiichi Shirayanagi (President of the Japan
Committee for the World Conference on Religion and Peace)

● Peace Greetings

● Closing Remarks

The Ven. Ryusho Kobayashi (Executive Director of Enryakuji
Temple, Mt. Hiei)





Greetings

It was 10 years ago that religious representatives from around the world and from within Japan gathered here at Mt. Hiei to make their prayers for peace. I am happy to welcome you who also gathered here today from around the world and within Japan as the representative followers of different religions.

I wish to thank you for your participation in the last two days of the conference in Kyoto, and also for having come so far to be present at this ceremony today. As a representative of the sponsors, I wish to express to you my joy in your presence here in this sacred place, the peak of Mt. Hiei, and for the fact that you will be offering prayers for peace.

Looking back on the events of 10 years ago, the original peace prayer held at Mt. Hiei was called by the most Ven. Etai Yamada who was at that time the patriarch of Tendai Buddhism, and was sponsored by Japanese leaders of different religious organizations. They were the Ven. Ryusho Abeno of Buddhism, Cardinal Jiro Satowaki of Christianity, Madam Naohi Deguchi of Sectarian Shinto, the Ven. Muneyoshi Tokugawa of Shinto Shrines, the Rev. Nikkyo Niwano of New Religions, and the Ven. Shocho Hagami of Enryakuji Temple. Thanks to those predecessors, a new movement, and a new understanding of the importance of religious cooperation for peace began ten years ago. This is why ever since then, every year we have gathered here at Mt. Hiei to pray together. During the past ten years, we particularly remember the "Multaqua-Hieizan Conference" with Muslim leaders, the "Forum: Messages from the Children" with young people,

**THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE**



and the memorial service at "the 50th Anniversary after the end of World War II," among other memorable meetings.

As you all know, the world situation is very serious today. But I feel that it is important that we all come together to express the love of God and the compassion of Buddha. To understand what it is to be really human is to share together, to join hand in hand, in prayer.

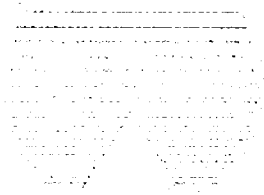
Looking at the future of mankind, I don't feel that we need to be pessimistic. We are, after all, the children of God. Our prayers will serve to help all of mankind. When we pray to the Gods and to the Buddhas, we are praying for all who suffer, for the children who have died or are ill, or for the end of the war, and for the end of armaments. Because, after all, praying together is a way we create peaceful hearts within our hearts.

Thank you very much for your participation today.

Mt. Hiei, August 4, 1997

The Most Ven. Eshin Watanabe
Honorary President
Japan Conference of Religious Representatives
(Supreme Priest of the Tendai Buddhist Denomination)

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love,
where there is injury, pardon,
where there is doubt, faith,
where there is despair, hope,
where there is sadness, joy.



自 自 自
ら ら ら
僧 法 私
に に に
歸 歸 歸
依 依 依
し し し
た た た
て て て
ま ま ま
つ る

祈りのことば

それぞれの神に、それぞれの仏に、

言葉は違い、儀式は違ったが、心がひとつになるのがわかった。

「どうか、人類が助け合い、共に生きることができますように。

世界平和が一日も早く訪れますように。」

その真摯な気持ちが比叡山を満たした。

静謐な空気の中に祈りの言葉が流れた ——。

我々日本仏教徒の代表はここ比叡山上
に集い、日本はもとより世界の仏教徒を
はじめ多くの人々と共に、世界の平和と
人々の心の平安と、命あるものとの共生
を願い、祈りを捧げます。

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants
and reveal to them Thy great purpose.

May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law.

Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them
strength to serve Thee. O God! leave them not to
themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy
knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love.

Verily, Thou art their helper and their Lord.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

«رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ»
(سورة المتعة: الآية ٤)

«رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ»
(سورة إبراهيم: الآية ٤١)

«رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا»
(سورة الكهف: الآية ١٠)

«رَبَّنَا لَا تَزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ أَنْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ»
(صدق الله العظيم)

THE
SUN
SUMMIT

We pray that the way be spread.

We pray that all humanity be saved.

We pray that all humanity be forgiven.

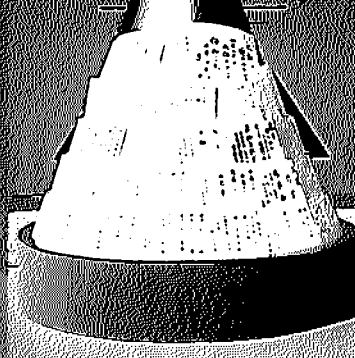
We pray that all humanity have peace.

We pray that all churches are saved.

天地の神にぞいのる朝なごの
波立たぬ世を願ひつつ新しき
天地の神にぞいのる朝なごの
波立たぬ世を願ひつつ新しき
年の始めを迎え祝はむ

祈りの平和の教者

Prayer for Peace



比叡山宗教団体の創立十周年を記念して、
あまたの宗教者が集い、
平和の祈りを捧げることは、
誠に重要であるものとあります。
ここに我々が集うのは、平和を花開かせ、
万物の共存・共生を願うため、
もって平和で穏やかな世の到来に向け、
私は昭和天皇と今上天皇の御慶賀を
兼ねて平和の祈りを致します。

水と緑の地球に住む58億の人々と
生あるものすべてが、
希望にあふれた新世紀の到来を待ち望む今、
ここ比叡山山頂の祈りの場において、
新日本宗教団体連合会は、
真の恒久平和が、一日も早く実現するよう、
心を込めて祈りを捧げ行動してまいります。
そして、宗我を超え、祈りを結集し、
理解と信頼、正義と寛容、
更に慈しみと勇気をもって平和への道を
歩むことをお願い致します。

MEETING

1. Uttitthe nappamajjeyya dhammam sucantam care
Dhammacari sukham seti asmim loke paramhi ca.
2. Na bhaje papake mitte na bhaje purisadhame
Bhajetha mitte kalyane bhajetha purisuttame.
3. Sabbe tasanti dandassa sabbe bhayanti maccuno
Attanam upamam katva na haneyya na ghataye.
4. Na hi verena verani sammantidha kudacanam
Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo sanantano.
5. Caram ce nadhigaccheyya seyyam sadisamattano
Ekacariyam dalham kayira natthi bale sahayata.
6. Puttamatti dhanammattihi iti bala vihannati
Atta hi attano natthi kuto putta kuto dhanam.

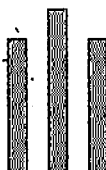
The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace

*(Rig da ve I. 89.1) May auspicious thoughts
come to us from every quarter,
unhindered, removing all obstacles;
gods may always be for our progress and
our unflinching protectors every day. (29)*

是の比叡の淨き処を嚴の斎庭と破い滑めて
天津神臨刺立て招奉り座奉る掛巻くも綬に畏き
天照皇大神を始め天津神国御神八百万神等
の大前に斎主教派神道連合会芳村正徳
恐み恐み白さく
此の世の万物は神の恩恵に依りて産れ興さしめ給ひて
豊かに牟久栄に成し幸へ給へる時世
を以て茲に比叡山宗教サミット十周年記念として
世界宗教者平和の祈りの集いを催すに当たり
懇ろに乞折奉らくを平らけく安らけく相諾ひ
聞食して各も各も広く大しき心を以て万の国々と
睦び親しみ又心傷つけ争ひ事の災無く
様々な宗教は有れども皆平和を願ひ思へる心は一つにして
清き正しき誠心に満ちて浦安の
世を弥益々に富栄え行かしめ給へと恐み恐みも白す



Peace,
hand in hand
with justice,
and prayer.



HIROSHIMA TOUR

August 5 ~ 6, 1997

Hiroshima Tour for Overseas Delegates

Having finished the official programs from August 1 to 4 in Kyoto, the overseas delegates joined the optional tour to Hiroshima, accompanied by the Ven. Gijun Sugitani, Secretary General of the host organization.

On August 5, members of the Hiroshima Religion Federation warmly received the party. They visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and offered flowers and incense at the repose tower to commemorate 80 thousand unknown lives lost to the A-bomb. They proceeded to another monument in which the list of the names of 200 thousand citizens killed by the A-bomb is kept. They then made a field trip to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, where the visitors saw records and exhibits of the war. The exhibitions seemed to project the scar that the war inflicted on people's hearts, regardless of the differences of winners and losers.

The next day, early in the morning, the delegates attended the interreligious memorial service convened by the Hiroshima Religion Federation. The Ven. Sugitani offered flowers and Mrs. Tangiora from New Zealand representing the party offered incense. Next, they joined the Peace Ceremony hosted by the Hiroshima Municipal Government. At 8:15, the time the atomic bomb was dropped in 1945, all the attendees prayed in silence. After the memorial ceremony, they were invited to a welcoming reception. One of the speakers at the meeting, Chief Rabbi Prof. Rosen, expressed the hope that Hiroshima would continue to be the symbol of both life and death, and the people of Hiroshima be living witness of resurrection and hope over agony and despair.

On the afternoon of August 6, the party left Hiroshima by super-express train for Kyoto.





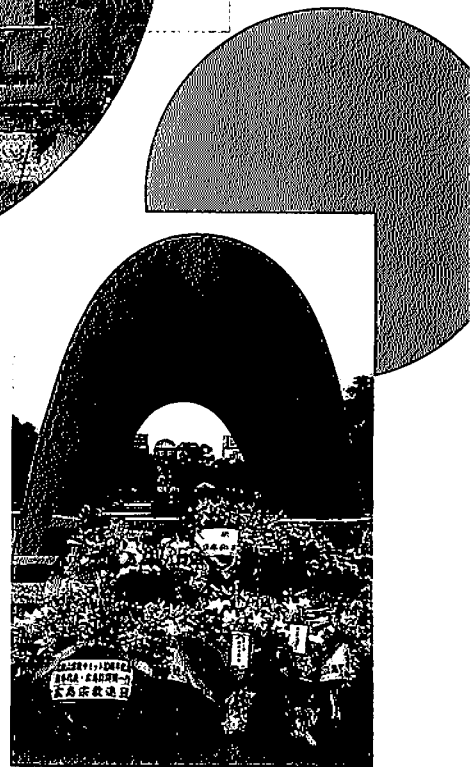
NO MORE



TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MEETING
ON MT. Hiei

THE INTERRELIGIOUS GATHERING
OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

JAPAN CONFERENCE OF
RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVES



世界の宗教者が初めて日本に集った「比叡山宗教サミット」十周年を記念し、八月三日から三日間、京都市内や比叡山延暦寺（大津市）で「世界宗教者平和の祈りの集い」が開かれる。世界平和の実現に宗教者はどう貢献しているのか。京都総局 沢田 幸子

十年前の「宗教サミット」は、天台宗が比叡山開創十二百年を記念して発案し、全日本仏教会、日本キリスト教連合会、神本会、教派神道連合会、新日本宗教団体連合会などが日本宗教代表者会議を構成、一九八七年八月に比叡山などで開いた。十六の国からキリスト教、イスラム教、ユダヤ教、ヒンズー教などの代表二十四人、国内から

かねて「世界平和祈願集会」がイタリヤ・アッシシで開かれ、諸宗教の関係者が平和への祈りをなぞっている。

「サミット」はアッシシの精神を引き継ぎ、各宗教が同席し語り合うこと自体に意義があるとされ、参加者の一部が平和への所信を表明しただけでなく、具体的な議論もあった。比叡山メッセでは「使命はあまりに大

既成仏教で信者数が最大級の浄土真宗本願寺派は、日本宗教代表者会議に役員を出していない。同会議に属さない創価学会は「世界の宗教との対話は相互に進める」との立場を取り、一部の宗教者は「祈るだけで平和が来るのだろうか」と疑問も抱きかけている。

平和へ貢献を模索

この十年間で、世界の構造は一変した。冷戦が終結する一方、各地で民族紛争が多発。宗派や教派が異なるが故に、対立が激化したケースも多い。このため、今回設定された二つのテーマのうち一つは「宗教の平和

活動と民族紛争」。ボスニア・ヘルツェゴビナから来日するカトリックの大司教らが意見を述べ

前回と状況一変 民族紛争も議題

は約六百人が参加。平和を求める「比叡山メッセ」が採択された。

高まる協力機運

教義や世界観の違いで、時に戦争をも起こした宗教の各派が集った奇想には、第二バチカン公会議（一九六二―六五）が諸宗教との協力を打ち出したように始まる各宗派間の協力機運の高まりがあった。

「サミット」開年の八六年には、ローマ法王ヨハネ・パウロ二世の呼び

き「われわれの力はあまりに小さい」と、「祈りから始めなければならぬ」と呼びかけ、行動よりも祈りに重点が置かれたといえる。

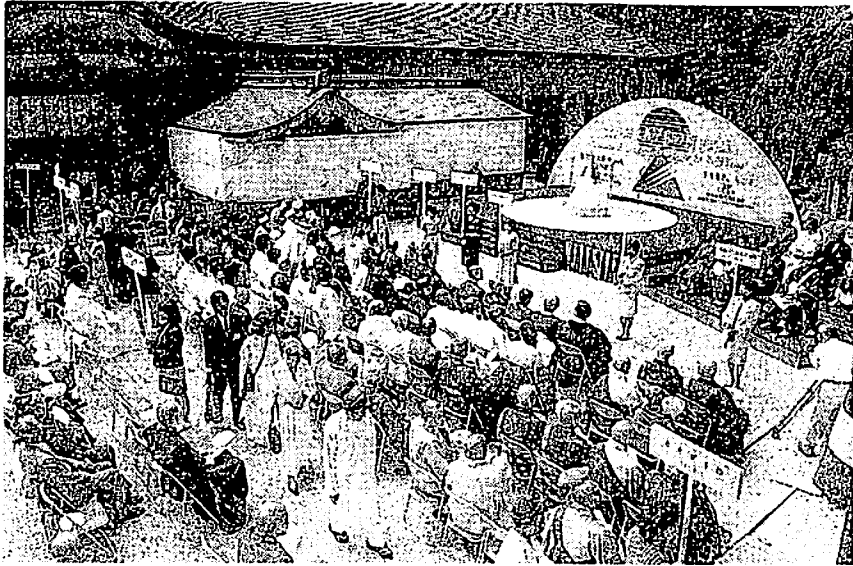
今回の事務総長を務める杉谷義純・天台宗事務総長は、この十年間の国内外の各宗教の動きを「重要な問題に対し、意見を述べようという機運になっていた。難民救済などで、世宗教との協力も進められてきた」と、感銘を覚える。

だが、温度差もある。

くる。ニューヨークとカナダからは、先住民に伝承されている民族宗教の代表者が参加する。

宗教と国家権力が結びついた不幸な歴史から、戦後のわが国では宗教離れが加速した。しかし心のよりどころを失った現代人は、宗派を超えた広い意味での「宗教」を求めているものにも思える。そのなかで開かれる宗教の「世界会議」。世界平和の基盤と向き合い、模索の場。――。議題の高まりに注目したい。

次々と会場入りをする各宗教・宗派の代表者ら



平和の祈り新たに

大津 「心に、平和の誓いを築きたい」。比叡山宗教サミット10周年を記念して4日、天台宗総本山・比叡山延暦寺（大津市坂本町）で開かれた「世界宗教者平和の祈りの集い」の式典。日本を含め19カ国から集まった宗教家らが「比叡山メッセージ」を発表し、平和への祈りを新たにした。

宗教サミット10周年記念

比叡山メッセージ

各宗教・宗派代表ら発表

宗教サミットは1987年8月、16カ国の宗教家が比叡山に集って実現。「宗教の目標はせむしめれば人類の幸せ、世界平和の二つです」との意思を貫いた故山田恵輔・天台座主の呼び掛けが発端だった。世界平和のために宗教家の連帯を訴えるメッセージが世界に発せられ、大きな反響を呼んだ。

この日の式典には、海外からの約30人を含め計約1200人が参加。「平和の祈り」とともに、参加者が黙とうをさげた後、各宗派の代表者から「比叡山メッセージ」を発表した。最後に、小林隆彰・延暦寺執行は「みんなが力を合わせて努力すれば、平和が実現するに違いない」という大げさな大団長も、今日の式典を閉く言葉になったのだ。は」と笑顔で話した。

11
8

locations include: Bangkok • Bening • Bonn • Brussels • Chicago • Hong Kong • Jakarta • Kuala Lumpur • London • Los Angeles •

August.5,1997・Mainichi Newspaper

RELIGIOUS UNITY SOUGHT

World religious leaders strive for reconciliation at a series of lectures on Mount Hiei, near Kyoto.

By **TARO KARASAKI**
Asahi Evening News

KYOTO—Representatives from 16 religions and religious organizations worldwide Sunday wrapped up a series of lectures on dealing with regional conflicts and enhancing world peace, in which they agreed to promote dialogue among their followers and try to reduce ignorance and isolation.

The religious leaders, participating in the 10th Religious Summit Meeting on Mount Hiei, were to adopt today a joint statement calling for promotion of interdenominational dialogue and to offer a joint prayer for world peace at Enryakuji temple.

Participants at the summit in

individual presentations held over the weekend cited many cases in which their own doctrines could be used for the pursuit of wealth and power or to facilitate the perpetration of war. The participants also agreed that it was their duty to promote the idea that all beliefs pray to a single God.

"The key is mutual understanding. This does not mean giving up beliefs and identity, nor seeking economic benefit," said Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, an Orthodox Christian priest from Syria, in a speech. Ibrahim condemned the egoism of some religious activists who dominate the population in his country through aggressive evangelism.

"Absence of serious relations between Christians and Muslims is principally due to evangelism," he said.

"What unites beliefs exceeds what separates them," Ibrahim said. "God is one and unique." Ibrahim added that both the West and the East have to learn to admit the existence of each other's faiths.

"Religion seeks to give meaning and guidance to our being. Interreligious dialogue is essential in breaking down the barrier of prejudice, fear and isolation," said Rabbi David Rosen, of Israel.

"We are all limbs of a common body," Rosen said.

"People are living in an age of constant murder and destruction. It is necessary for religious groups to unite and stop this destruction," said Ahmad Umar Hashim, a Muslim and president of Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

United Nations Undersecretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and for Public Information Yasushi Akashi, delivering a keynote lecture on the opening day Saturday, said that too often religion has served as tools of zealous political leaders who seek war to further their power.

"Religion must not be misused in a way to encourage intolerance, and must encourage tolerance among various nations by showing the common grounds to people who otherwise would see themselves different," Akashi said.

Akashi outlined a four-point guideline for the role of religions in helping prevent regional strife.

"Ensure that religions are not used as a pretext for violence, use the teachings to spread moral values, use moral and religious teachings to condemn the decisions backing conflict, and promote reconciliation," Akashi urged.

Interfaith meet for world peace starts in Kyoto

By Kahori Sakane

Daily Yomiuri Staff Writer

KYOTO—Religious leaders from around the world gathered in Kyoto on Saturday on the opening day of the Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace.

Over 2,000 leaders and followers of 95 faiths, including Buddhism, are attending the three-day event, which marks its 10th anniversary this year. The participants hail from 19 different countries, including Japan.

Among the participants are Cardinal Francis Arinze, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and Ahmad Umar Hashim, president of Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

The summit was started 10 years ago by the Tendai Buddhist denomination shortly after it marked the 1,200th anniversary of the founding of its head temple at Mt. Hiei.

The annual gathering has attracted eminent religious leaders from all over the world, fulfilling an idea first proposed by Pope John Paul II in 1986 in Assisi, Italy.

At that time the pontiff urged interreligious prayer as an ideal way to achieve peace and mutual understanding.



Yomiuri Shimbun

Participants gather on a stage at the International Conference Hall on Saturday in Kyoto

Ven. Gijun Sugitani, secretary general of the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives, the host of the event,

opened the three-day meet Saturday at Kyoto's International Conference Hall. In his address, Sugitani said it was

important for religious leaders to cooperate so that people of different faiths could pray together for world peace.

● List of Overseas Delegates

● Bahai

Dr. Foad Katirai	Representative, Bahai International Community Official, National Spiritual Assembly of Bahai of Japan	Japan
(accompanied by) Ms. Keiko Sakamoto	Official, Local Spiritual Assembly of Sapporo, Bahai of Japan	Japan

● Buddhism

The Rev. Dharmapala Mahathera (accompanied by) Mrs. Keiko Azuma	President, Bengal Buddhist Association Associate Prof., Taiken Kensington University	India Japan
Dr. Ahangama Tudor Ariyaratne (accompanied by) Miss Wasantha Samarawickrema	Founder President, Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka Secretary to Dr. Ariyaratne, Sarvodaya Movement	Sri Lanka Sri Lanka
Lt. General Chalom Wismol (accompanied by) Mr. Ambhorn Arunrangsri	Acting President, World Fellowship of Buddhists Hon. Treasurer, World Fellowship of Buddhists	Thailand Thailand
The Venerable Tep Vong (accompanied by) The Rev. Osamu Shibui	President, Cambodian Buddhist Association Japanese Language Library, Wat Unaloom	Cambodia Cambodia
The Most Ven. Wol-Ju Song (accompanied by) The Ven. Wol-Seo Kim The Ven. Nung-Kwan Kim The Ven. Sung-Woo Seu The Ven. Duck-Lim Han	Chairman, Korean Buddhist Association Vice-Chairman, Korean Buddhist Association The Korean Buddhist Chogyae Order The Korean Buddhist Chogyae Order The Korean Buddhist Chogyae Order	Korea Korea Korea Korea Korea

● Christianity

Catholic

His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze	President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue	Vatican City
His Eminence Vinko Cardinal Puljić (accompanied by) Msgr. Mato Zovkić	Archbishop of Sarajevo Vicar General, Sarajevo Archdiocese	Bosnia-Herzegovina Bosnia-Herzegovina
The Rev. Fr. John M. Shirieda, S.D.B.	Under Secretary Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue	Vatican City
The Most Rev. Fr. Agostino Gardin, OFMConv.	Minister General, Order of Friars Minor Conventual	Italy

The Rev. Fr. Maximilian Mizzi, OFMConv.	Delegate General for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue Centro Franciscano Internazionale Per Il Dialogo	Italy
(accompanied by) Fr. Eugenio M. Kawashimo, OFMConv.	The Minister Provincial of Japan Conventual Franciscans of Japan	Japan
The Rev. Fr. Thomas Michel, S. J.	Secretary for Interreligious Dialogue Society of Jesus	Italy
The Rev. Fr. Gonzalo Ituarte Verduzco, O.P.	Vicar for Justice and Peace Diocese of Sancristobal de las Casas	Mexico
Orthodox		
His Eminence Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim	Metropolitan of Aleppo Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese	Syria
Anglican		
The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing	Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury	U. S. A.
(accompanied by) Mrs. Mary T. Swing		U. S. A.
Protestant		
The Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah	Deputy General Secretary, World Council of Churches	Switzerland
Dr. Gene Reeves	Unitarian Universalist Association	U. S. A.

Hinduism

Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma	Professor, Dept of Sanskrit, Patna University	India
(accompanied by) Mr. Abhay Shankar	Student	India

Indigenous Religions

Mrs. Pauline E. Tangiora, J.P.	Retired Maori Tribal Elder, Aotearoa	New Zealand
(accompanied by) Mr. Joseph Selwyn TeRito	Dean, Faculty of Maori Studies	New Zealand
Mr. Tulley Spotted Eagle Boy	President of Mother Earth Lodge Medicine Man of Mic Mac Nation	Canada
Dr. Hum D. Bui, M. D.	General Secretary, CaoDai Overseas Headquarters	U. S. A.
(accompanied by) Mrs. Hong D. Bui, M. D.		U. S. A.
Mr. Jasper Bui		U. S. A.

Dr. Chieu Van Dang, M. D.
Mrs. Nga Nguyen Dang

U. S. A
U. S. A

● Islam

Prof. Ahmad Umar Hashim	President, Al-Azhar University	Egypt
(accompanied by)		
Prof. Muhammad Muhammad Abulaylah	Faculty of Languages & Translations Islamic Dept. in English, Al-Azhar University	Egypt
His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro	Grand Mufti of Syria	Syria
(accompanied by)		
Mrs. Sabah Jabri		Syria
Mr. Farouk Akbik	Escort-Interpreter of Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro	Syria
Mrs. Najah al-Chaar		Syria
Dr. Abdulla Bin Saleh Al-Obaid	Secretary General, Muslim World League	Saudi Arabia

● Jainism

The Rev. Preminder N. Jain (Bawa)	United Nations Representative Interfaith Center of New York	U. S. A.
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● Judaism

Chief Rabbi Prof. David Rosen	Director of Interfaith Relations and Co-liaison to the Vatican Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith	Israel
(accompanied by)		
Mrs. Sharon Rozen		Israel
Mr. Daniel Kropf		Israel

● Sikhism

Maj. Gen. Sujan Singh Uban	Founder President, Vanguard for Peace Foundation	India
(accompanied by)		
Mrs. Harinder Durga	Secretary to Maj. Gen. Uban	India
Mr. S. B. Durga	Project Director, Vanguard for Peace Foundation	India

● Zoroastrianism

Dr. Homi B. Dhalla	President, World Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation	India
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● Interreligious Organizations

The Very Rev. James Parks Morton	President, Temple of Understanding President, Interfaith Center of New York	U. S. A.
(accompanied by) The Rev. Luis M. Dolan, C. P.	Consultant, Interreligious Program, Church of St. Emeric	U. S. A.
Dr. William F. Vendley	Secretary General, World Conference on Religion and Peace	U. S. A.
Dr. Robert Traer	General Secretary, International Association for Religious Freedom	U. K.
Prof. Agostino Giovagnoli	Head, Dept. of Asian Relations Community of S. Egidio	Italy
Dr. Alberto Quattrucci	Secretary General, International Meetings, People & Religions, Community of S. Egidio	Italy
Miss Natalia Dallapiccola (accompanied by) Miss Christina Lee	Center of Interreligious Dialogue, Focolare Movement Center of Interreligious Dialogue, Focolare Movement	Italy Italy
Miss Kimiko Kurokuchi	Focolare Movement	Italy
Fr. Mong Eun Kim (accompanied by) Dr. Kwangsoo Park	President, Korean Conference on Religion and Peace Vice Secretary General, Korean Conference on Religion and Peace	Korea Korea
Dr. Pal Khn Chon Miss Sung-Sug Lee	President, Asian Conference on Religion and Peace Executive Secretary, Korean Conference on Religion and Peace	Korea Korea

● The Japan Conference of Religious Representatives Executive Members

(as of August 4, 1997)

● Honorary President

The Most Ven. Eshin Watanabe, Tendai Zasu
The Supreme Priest of the Tendai Buddhist Denomination

● Honorary Advisors

Madame Kiyoko Deguchi	Spiritual Leader of Oomoto
The Most Ven. Ryushu Takai	President, Japan Buddhist Federation
The Most Rev. Fumio Hamao	President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan
The Rev. Morisada Hosokawa	Senior President, Association of Shinto Shrines
The Rev. Nikkyo Niwano	Founder of Rissho Kosei-Kai Honorary Chairman, Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan

● Presidents

His Eminence Cardinal Seiichi Shirayanagi	President, Japan Committee for the World Conference on Religion and Peace
The Ven. Eiki Ikeda	President, Japan Religious Committee for World Federation

● Secretary General

The Very Ven. Gijun Sugitani	President, Tendai Buddhist Denomination
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● Vice-Secretary Generals

The Rev. Munehiro Okuda	Vice-Chief Director, Oomoto Headquarters
The Rev. Yoshinobu Minami	Executive Director, External Relations Dept. Rissho Kosei-Kai
The Rev. Tsunekio Tanaka	Deputy Chief Priest , Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine



TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MEETING ON MT. HIEI

Afterward

To commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei, the Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace was held in the summer of 1997. Starting with the first preparatory meeting in February of 1996, it took us a year and a half get ready to open this gathering. During our preparations we had over thirty meetings, counting formal meetings alone. The gathering shows precisely how well religious people of various faiths, transcending sects and denominations, cooperated with each other for the same goal in one united body.

It is not so easy to express the results of our ten-year effort in a few words. But I can say that we owe this great success to cooperative work by the representatives of seven organizations: the Japanese Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the Japan Religions Committee for World Federation, and the five organizations in the Japan Religions League. Despite differences in their respective views, they took unselfishness for granted and developed this gathering through friendly interaction.

In Japan it is common to see religious people of different faiths meet, talk and share some activities in daily life. This kind of cooperation, however, still seems to be far beyond our reach in the world at large. Among the overseas religious representatives, this time we had participants from the Middle East and from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It can be assumed that

this reflects their expectation of Japanese religious people who have been working in the cause of peace through interreligious dialogue and cooperation. In this sense, I think it crucially important for each of the participants in this gathering to be more aware of his or her responsibility as a true mediator for the realization of world peace.

Another important thing is to continue our efforts directed at greater unity in cooperation. We should keep moving in the firm belief that some day, even if the pace is very slow, we will be able to spread this harmony to all countries all over the world.

Finally, I express my heartfelt thanks to every committee member, to the secretariat, and to a lot of young volunteers from more than ten religious organizations who helped us behind the scenes and worked hard as the driving force leading this gathering to success. I would like to close these remarks by saying that I certainly saw hope for the future in those young people who devoted themselves to volunteer work during the sessions.

Thank you.

The Rev. Yoshinobu Minami

Vice-Secretary General

Japan Conference of Religious Representatives

Executive Director of External Relations Dept.

Rissho Kosei Kai

**THE INTERRELIGIOUS
GATHERING OF PRAYER
FOR WORLD PEACE**

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Tenth Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mount Hiei

The Interreligious Gathering of Prayer for World Peace

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