



Religions for Peace
Different Faiths, Common Action

Religions for Peace, a growing global network of inter-religious councils and groups, harnesses the power of cooperation among the world's religious communities to transform conflict, build peace, and advance sustainable development. Today, the *Religions for Peace* network comprises more than sixty national and regional inter-religious councils, organizations of religious women, and affiliated groups.

Religions for Peace is led by a council of senior religious leaders that represents the religious and geographic diversity of the world's faith communities. The World Council of *Religions for Peace* includes Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Indigenous leaders from all regions of the world.

Religions for Peace fosters high-level multi-religious cooperation; builds and equips inter-religious councils at the local, national, regional and international levels; and networks inter-religious councils and affiliated groups globally. *Religions for Peace* also works with religious women's organizations around the world to establish "women of faith networks" at the global, regional and national levels, to strengthen their capacity for advocacy and service delivery, and to mainstream women into multi-religious leadership roles.

Cooperation among the world's religious communities has enormous potential to improve conditions for billions of people worldwide. Of the three billion people worldwide living on less than two dollars (US) a day, and the forty million people with HIV/AIDS, ninety percent are members of religious communities. The scale of religious infrastructure in many countries is the most developed and inter-connected social infrastructure in existence, reaching from the smallest village to the capital and beyond.

Guided by respect for religious differences and a belief in the power of multi-religious cooperation, *Religions for Peace* mobilizes religious communities to collaborate on deeply held and widely shared concerns. Multi-religious cooperation unleashes the hidden assets of religious communities and is more powerful, both substantively and symbolically, than the efforts of individual faith communities acting alone.

Religions for Peace has a strong track record fostering effective inter-religious cooperation in the most challenging situations, earning credibility with local religious leaders and religious communities worldwide. No other multi-religious effort is as effective as *Religions for Peace* in integrating a multi-tiered network to harness cooperation to address global challenges.

Founded in 1970 as an international, non-sectarian organization, *Religions for Peace* is now the largest coalition of the world's religious communities. *Religions for Peace* is supported by foundations, governments, inter-governmental organizations, religious communities, religiously affiliated development agencies, and individuals.



RELIGIONS FOR PEACE EIGHTH WORLD ASSEMBLY
26-29 August, 2006; Kyoto, Japan

Religions for Peace World Assembly

The *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly will convene almost 500 senior religious leaders from every region of the world and all major faith traditions to address the power of religious communities to confront violence and advance shared security. Assembly delegates come from the *Religions for Peace* network of more than sixty national and regional inter-religious councils (IRCs) and groups, organizations of religious women, and religious youth groups. Delegates include Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Shinto, Zoroastrian and Indigenous leaders.

The world's largest and most diverse multi-religious event, the Eighth World Assembly will address the concrete ways religious communities working together can transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development. The assembled religious leaders will also seek to forge global partnerships among religious communities and representatives of governments, development agencies and civil society.

The *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly returns to Kyoto, a birthplace of the global inter-religious peace movement and site of the historic first World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* in 1970. Since then, *Religions for Peace* World Assemblies have brought the world's religious communities together to address the critical global challenges of our time – war, disarmament, development, human rights, and our environment – from a faith perspective. Previous *Religions for Peace* World Assemblies have convened in Louvain, Belgium (1974), Princeton, New Jersey, USA (1979), Nairobi, Kenya (1984), Melbourne, Australia (1989), Rome, Italy (1994) and Amman, Jordan (1999).

Assembly Theme: “Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security”

Violence is a pervasive reality for millions of members of the human family. Modern forms of violence include armed conflict, poverty and the devastating human impact of HIV/AIDS. By acknowledging these forms of violence and the ways they impact our communities, religious communities can be effective agents for peace and articulate a new vision of shared security. Senior religious leaders from the *Religions for Peace* global network will share their experiences and develop action programs for the next five years that aim to advance shared security for all.

Assembly Objectives

- Advance cooperation among religious communities.
- Forge a deeper global moral consensus.
- Build action-oriented partnerships.
- Convene working sessions on inter-religious capacity building.
- Gather religious leaders from areas of conflict.
- Elect the *Religions for Peace* Board.

Religions for Peace

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**RELIGIONS FOR PEACE WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY
24-25 August, 2006; Kyoto, Japan**

Religions for Peace Women's Assembly

From 24-25 August, 2006, 150 religious women leaders will gather from the world's major faith traditions for the *Religions for Peace Women's Assembly*, "Women of Faith: Assembling for Action."

This event provides a crucial platform for reflection, discussion and mobilization regarding the role of religious women in multi-religious cooperation. The Women's Assembly is an ideal opportunity to build and strengthen national, regional and global women of faith networks to transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development. The Women's Assembly will be held just prior to the *Religions for Peace Eighth World Assembly*, the world's largest and most diverse multi-religious event.

Plenary sessions on the key areas of *Religions for Peace's* mission will provoke discussion, build consensus and inspire action. The Women's Assembly and World Assembly are ideal opportunities to strengthen the global women of faith network by providing practical support in organizing women's networks, equipping them for action and mainstreaming women into leadership of inter-religious bodies. Well-known women leaders from religion, government, international organizations and civil society will join as panelists during the plenary sessions.

The *Religions for Peace Women's Assembly* will also seek to forge partnerships among religious communities and representatives of inter-governmental organizations and civil society. Finally, the delegates of the Assembly will nominate and elect the new members of the International Women's Coordinating Committee (IWCC), the body that guides *Religions for Peace's* Women's Mobilization Program.

Delegates

The Women's Assembly will bring together 150 religious women leaders and representatives from every region of the world and a broad range of major faith traditions.

Women invited include:

- Selected representatives of the regional and national inter-religious councils and groups
- Selected members of the Global Network of Religious Women's Organizations
- Women of faith with senior representative positions in religious communities
- Senior women representatives of the UN, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations
- Experts and scholars who specialize in women and religion

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RELIGIONS FOR PEACE YOUTH ASSEMBLY 21-25 August, 2006; Hiroshima and Kyoto, Japan

Religions for Peace Youth Assembly

Approximately 300 religious youth leaders (ages 18-35) from every region of the world will gather for the *Religions for Peace Youth Assembly*, “Religious Youth for Peace: Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security” from 21-25 August, 2006 in Hiroshima and Kyoto, Japan.

The *Religions for Peace Youth Assembly* will begin in Hiroshima from 21-23 August before traveling to Kyoto on 24 August for the remaining days.

Youth leaders representing the world’s religious traditions will discuss the unique role of religious youth in preventing violence, and delegates will develop a plan for youth-led multi-religious advocacy and action in their respective regions and beyond.

During 2005 and early 2006, youth leaders representing religious communities and religious youth organizations gathered for regional Youth Pre-Assembly Preparatory meetings in Asia (Indonesia), North America (USA), Africa (Tanzania), Europe (Georgia), and the Middle East (Lebanon). The meetings examined the Assembly theme of “Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security” from a regional perspective. Each meeting analyzed the manifestation of violence in the region and made a commitment to develop a regional inter-religious youth network. The work begun at these meetings will continue at the Youth Assembly in Japan.

Assembly Theme: “Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security”

The Youth Assembly will address the same theme as the *Religions for Peace World Assembly*, bringing the unique perspective of religious youth to the issues of transforming conflict, building peace, and advancing sustainable development in collaboration towards shared security. Young voices from religion, politics, the arts, and other sectors will examine the causes and impact of violence and the potential of religious youth to effect positive change in their regions through multi-religious collaboration.

Youth Assembly Objectives

- Advance cooperation among religious youth.
- Build regional inter-religious youth networks.
- Set regional action plans to advance the work of the networks after the Assembly.
- Craft a statement on the Assembly theme from the Youth delegates to be presented to the World Assembly.
- Assist the nominating committee to nominate the new International Youth Committee.

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WORLD ASSEMBLY PROGRAM

Sessions Open to the Press

TIME	25-Aug Eve	26-Aug Day 1	27-Aug Day 2	28-Aug Day 3	29-Aug Day 4
8:00		8:00-8:30 Informal Press Briefing Room 157	8:00-8:30 Informal Press Briefing Room 157	8:00-8:30 Informal Press Briefing Room 157	8:00-8:30 Informal Press Briefing Room 157
8:30					
9:00			8:45-10:30 Plenary III Advancing shared security through peace building Main Hall	8:45-10:30 Plenary IV Advancing shared security through sustainable development Main Hall	
9:30					
10:00					
10:30					
11:00		10:30-12:30 Opening Ceremony Main Hall	11:00-12:00 President Khatami Press Briefing Room 157		11:00-12:30 Plenary V <i>Mobilizing action for shared security</i> Main Hall
11:30					
12:00					
12:30					12:30-13:30 Closing Ceremony Main Hall
13:00		12:45-14:00 Opening Press Conference Room 157			
13:30					
14:00		14:00-15:30 Plenary I Confronting violence & advancing shared security Main Hall	14:00-14:30 Informal Networking Session Annex		13:45-15:00 Closing Press Conference Room 157
14:30			14:30-15:30 Daily Press Briefing Greeley Prize & day's activities Room 157		
15:00					
15:30		Group Photo			
16:00		16:00-17:15 Plenary II Advancing shared security through conflict transformation Main Hall			
16:30				16:00-17:45 Skills Building Workshops Rooms B1&B2	
17:00		16:15-17:15 Daily Press Briefing MDG Toolkit & day's activities Room 157			
17:30			15:30-18:30 Visitation to Religious Sites in Kyoto		
18:00	18:00-18:30 VIP Reception Takaragaike Prince Hotel Press: PHOTOS ONLY	17:30-19:00 Commission Mtg. 1 Room A, B1, D		17:15-18:15 Daily Press Briefing UNICEF Declaration & day's activities Room 157	
18:30					
19:00					



WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY PROGRAM: Sessions Open to the Press

TIME	AUGUST 24 TH	AUGUST 25 TH
8:00		
9:00		
10:00		
11:00		
12:00		
13:00		
14:00		
15:00	15:00-17:00 Opening Session Opening Performance Welcome Remarks Opening Remarks Keynote Address Assembly Procedures Announcement of Nomination Committee Assembly Song	
16:00		16:00-18:00 Plenary Concluding Session Working Group Reports Key Address Nomination of IWCC Closing Remarks
17:00		
18:00	17:30-20:00 Plenary Session I <i>"Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security"</i> <i>Women of Faith in Multi-Religious Cooperation:</i> <i>National, Regional and Global Networks</i> Opening Remarks Perspectives from women of faith networks Dialogue Session	18:00 – 18:30 Group Photo
19:00		18:30 – 19:00 Break
20:00		19:00-20:30 Closing Ceremony/Dinner Multi-religious Prayers Remarks Cultural Event
21:00		



RELIGIONS FOR PEACE EIGHTH WORLD ASSEMBLY
Assembly Theme: “Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security”

Background: The Hijacking and Abuse of Religion

Religion is being hijacked and abused by extremists to incite violence, by politicians to exploit sectarian differences, and by the media to religiously label parties in conflict without acknowledging the diversity within all religious traditions. The recent eruption of violence in the Middle East between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and between Israel and Hamas in Palestine; and the ongoing violence in Iraq; are just two examples of conflicts in which religion is being misused as a justification or excuse for violence.

People of faith, religious communities and religious leaders must stand up, speak out and take action whenever religion is hijacked or abused. Religious communities need to express their opposition whenever religion and its sacred principles are grotesquely distorted in the service of violence. People of faith must refuse to be held hostage by those who misuse religion.

Confronting Violence Through Cooperation

Cooperation is the key to confronting violence. Religious communities working together can be powerful actors to prevent violence before it erupts; mediate among armed groups in the midst of conflict; and lead their communities to rebuild war-torn societies. Multi-religious efforts are more powerful than the efforts of individual religious communities working alone. For example, *Religions for Peace* has actively addressed situations of conflict in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Iraq through multi-religious efforts. However, religious communities cannot confront violence alone – religious communities are strengthened through partnerships with governments, international organizations, and all sectors of society.

Religion as Part of the Solution to Advance Shared Security

Religious communities must be part of the solution to violence – there can be no security without them. Religious traditions call on people of faith to care for each other and to treat the problems faced by others as their own. Walls can never be high enough to insulate us from the needs and vulnerabilities of others. The Eighth World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* will articulate a new vision of “shared security” based on the common experiences of the world’s religious communities confronting violence.

Role of the *Religions for Peace* World Assembly

The *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly is a unique opportunity for religious leaders of all faith traditions to come together to reject the abuse of religion and to combat violence through multi-religious cooperation. Leaders of religious communities from regions of conflict will come together to find common moral ground and begin the process of healing. Assembly participants will forge partnerships among religious communities and between religious communities and other groups to advance a morally and practically grounded notion of shared security.



RELIGIONS FOR PEACE EIGHTH WORLD ASSEMBLY

Plenary Session Descriptions

Plenary I

26 Aug., 14:00-15:30

Topic: Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security

Moderator: **Dr. William F. Vendley**, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace* International, USA

HE Mohammad Khatami, Former President of Iran

Ms. Ann Veneman, Executive Director, UNICEF

Dr. Andrew Mack, Director, Human Security Centre, Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia, Canada

Prof. Hans Kung, President, Global Ethic Foundation, Germany

Plenary II

26 Aug., 16:00-17:15

Topic: Advancing Shared Security through Conflict Transformation

Moderator: **Dr. Agnes Abuom**, Central Committee, World Council of Churches, Kenya

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Moderator, *Religions for Peace* International, Jordan

Archbishop John Baptist Odama, Founder, Acholi Inter-religious Peace Initiative, Uganda

HE Mustafa Ceric, Reis-ul-ulema, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Ms. Ela Gandhi, Trustee, Gandhi Development Trust, South Africa

Bishop Victoria Cortez, Vice-President for the Latin American and Caribbean Region, Lutheran World Federation, Nicaragua

Rev. Solomon Muin, West Africa Youth Network Coordinator, Liberia

Plenary III

27 Aug., 8:45-10:30

Topic: Advancing Shared Security through Peace Building

Moderator: **The Honorable Thomas F. McLarty III**, President, Kissinger-McLarty Associates, USA

Chief Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Inter-religious Affairs, American Jewish Committee, USA

Rev. Dr. Bishop H. Mvume Dandala, General Secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches, South Africa

Mr. Kenneth Hackett, CEO, Catholic Relief Services, USA

Ven. Xue Cheng, Secretary General, China Buddhist Association, China

Ven. Gijun Sugitani, Chairperson, International Standing Commission on Disarmament & Security, Japan

HH Sadhvi Shilapiji, Co-Director, Veerayatan, India

Plenary IV

28 Aug., 8:45-10:30

Topic: Advancing Shared Security through Sustainable Development

Moderator: **Dr. Vinu Aram**, Director, Shanti Ashram, India

HE Kjell Magne Bondevik, Former Prime Minister of Norway

HE Sheikh Shaban Mubaje, Mufti, Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, Uganda

HE Cardinal Julio Terrazas, Archbishop of Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Ms. Beatriz Schulthess, President, Return to the Earth, Costa Rica

Ms. Katherine Marshall, Director and Counselor to the President, Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics, World Bank, USA

Plenary V

29 Aug., 11:00-12:30

Topic: Mobilizing Action for Shared Security

Moderator: **Most Rev. John Onaiyekan**, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria

Reports and recommendations from all Assembly events will be received at this session.



RELIGIONS FOR PEACE EIGHTH WORLD ASSEMBLY
26-29 August, 2006; Kyoto, Japan
Guidelines for Press

Press Registration

Press attending the *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly must sign in and receive credentials at the “Press Registration” table. The “Press Registration” table will be located near the entrance of the registration hallway at the Kyoto International Conference Hall, site of the Eighth World Assembly.

Press Access to the Assembly

Press are welcome to attend and cover: the Opening and Closing Ceremonies; the press conferences immediately following Opening and Closing Ceremonies; the Plenary Sessions; the daily press briefings; the visits of senior religious leaders to religious sites in Kyoto on 27 Aug; and additional sessions as outlined in the World Assembly Program for the Press. Additional personal interviews may be arranged if possible.

Press Center

Press will have access to the Assembly Press Center in the Kyoto International Conference Hall, which will serve as the main point of coordination between *Religions for Peace* and the press. Staff of the Press Center will provide daily Assembly press schedules, answer media inquiries, help arrange interviews and distribute informational materials. Work space with Internet and phone access will be available in the Press Center.