



URI InterfaithNews.Net - September 2005

Welcome to the e-zine InterfaithNews.Net sponsored by **United Religions Initiative** (URI) and **s.a.f net**.

Reacting to religious fanaticism and the challenges of advancing and sustaining a more equitable civilization, a global interfaith movement has sprung from the grassroots of religion and spirituality. InterfaithNews.Net (INN) seeks to chronicle this movement by focusing primarily on positive interfaith and religious news, events, and resources.

We missed July. Not because there was nothing to report — but rather because this editor was busy participating in some of those very events on which we are reporting. As always, if you are interested in contributing to the news (or even the editing) at InterfaithNews.Net, please contact me at the e-mail address below. Now, if you will forgive me a slight digression from the mission above...

The destruction caused by a class 4 hurricane hitting New Orleans was not unanticipated. For many of us though, the inability to provide immediate rescue and relief operations to the victims of Hurricane Katrina has come as a shocking surprise. How is it that the most powerful nation on Earth cannot get adequate shelter and food to the people of southern Louisiana? The future will, I hope, bring soul-searching answers and honest reflection on the lack of preparedness and the wisdom of rebuilding across New Orleans.

But for now, all Americans must step forth into the arena of giving — of money, of resources; of time, of prayer. If you can, please give money directly to a reputable relief agency, such as the American Red Cross (<http://www.redcross.org>; for more agencies, see

http://www.networkforgood.org/topics/animal_environ/hurricanes). Tens of thousands of souls — perhaps hundreds — will be sheltered in coming months in stadiums and anywhere else governments can find. They will need food, water, and other necessities. It is time for a collective belt tightening in America — it is time for sacrificial individual giving.

Even so, the world can ill afford for us to pull back from humanitarian aid abroad. We must not let this tragedy detract from public and private foreign aid, from the momentum for reform of international institutions, for debt relief, for sustainable development. Please look deep in your hearts and wallets, giving as you can to insure both adequate long-term relief for the refugees of Hurricane Katrina and continued

support for disaster recovery and development assistance worldwide.

Peace be with you,
Stephen A. Fuqua
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A Critical Interfaith Moment: Action and Dialogue

Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia, Secretary of the Interfaith Center for Peace in Columbus, Ohio, and Secretary-General of the World Sikh Council - American Region, offers his review of the June 2005 "World Council of Churches' landmark international interfaith conference titled 'Critical Moment in Interreligious Dialogue.'"

Read the article

Gathering at the Washington National Cathedral to Support Millennium

On September 11, the Washington National Cathedral (in Washington, D.C., USA), will host delegates from Christian denominations worldwide as they call for United Nations member states to support the **Millennium Development Goals**.

Read the article

God's October Surprise

Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center points out the confluence of holy days from many different religions in October, encouraging faith communities to use that time for shared celebration, prayer, reflection, and peacebuilding.

Read the article

WSC-AR Meets with Conference of European Churches to Discuss Hate Crimes

It is a sad mark of the persistence of ethnic, cultural, and religious bigotry that so many people continue to paint all Muslims as fanatics and terrorists, as evidenced by violence against individual Muslims and their religious institutions. It is equally disturbing that the same brush is often applied to non-Muslims of North African, Middle Eastern, and Indian origin, particularly to Sikhs.

Read the article

UN Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace

In June, a ground-breaking conference was held at the United Nations that brought together government representatives, members of the United Nations system, and religious NGOs. There they discussed the need for strengthened interfaith dialogue and its importance for peacebuilding. The following convenor's report summarizes the goals, conclusions, and recommendations of the conference.

Read the article

U.S. Muslim Religious Council Issues Fatwa Against Terrorism

Reacting to the bombings in London, the Fiq Council of North America on July 28 became the first known Muslim group to issue a *fatwa* against terrorism and religious extremism.

Read the article

URI Executive Director's Letter - July 2005

July 2005 letter from Charles Gibbs, Executive Director of the United Religions Initiative, to the Friends of the URI around the world.

Read the article

Interfaith groups find an oasis in the desert

A new study from the Global Health Council cites collaboration between religious and secular groups as enabling a more coordinated and rapid expansion of HIV/AIDS programs and services. As of 2003, 40 million people worldwide were estimated to be living with HIV; 3 million more are thought to have died from HIV/AIDS that year, leaving behind orphaned families and debilitated infrastructures

Read the article

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