



## URI InterfaithNews.Net - March / April 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.

The March edition of INN is a bit late, but full of wonderful news and articles. One subject not covered in this edition is the death of Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II, though not for lack of respect. As I am not Catholic, it is not surprising that there are many aspects of John Paul's legacy that I disagree with. But he was a good man who seems to have lived more fully to his Christian ideals than most religionists have done. I have immense respect for his legacy of interfaith dialogue (with fellow Christians, with Muslims, and particularly with Jews), peacebuilding, support for the environment, reconciliation with science, and many other issues. He stands as a true inspiration to people of faith the world over. Nevertheless, our coverage shall end there for the time being — primarily because there is already such a wealth of coverage in traditional media that there exists no reason to utilize this news source.

Another cause of delay is the redesign of the website (<http://www.interfaithnews.net>). It is now simpler to navigate and a more enjoyable reading experience. Many older articles are not yet in the site, but they will eventually be brought in as well. All current articles are open for your comments. I hope that you enjoy it.

Peace be with you,  
Stephen A. Fuqua  
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For older articles, please visit **<http://www.interfaithnews.net>**. Submit articles and send comments to **[editor@interfaithnews.net](mailto:editor@interfaithnews.net)**.

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### **Believers in All Faiths Have Duty**

Rev. Al Bloom of Hawai'i writes of the duty of all religious believers to express the social, affirming implications of their religious beliefs when engaged in social discourse, as well as the need to understand the meaning and fact of "separation of church and state."

**Read the article**

### **Global PeaceWorks 2004 Meets in New Delhi, India**

"As the year 2004 ended with many unresolved violent conflicts among religious communities, a group of volunteers of diverse faiths gathered in New Delhi, India to prove that peace among religions is indeed possible."

**Read the article**

### **Hans Kung to be Awarded 2005 Niwano Peace Prize**

The Niwano Peace Foundation, a Buddhist organization that annually recognizes and honors interreligious work through the Niwano Peace Prize, will this year honor Christian theologian and interfaith activist Hans Küng at a ceremony in Tokyo, Japan, on May 11, 2005.

**Read the article**

### **Muslims, Christians Dismiss Rumors of Proselytism**

Christian and Muslim leaders work to dispel rumors of rampant proselytism in Aceh province, the staunchly-Islamic Indonesian province and site of the most widespread destruction in the wake of the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

**Read the article**

### **Uniting Against Radicalism**

While most pundits blame Islamic fundamentalism (or Jewish, or Christian, etc.) for violence in the name of religion, Turkish author Harun Yahya believes it is rather radicalism that drives the supposedly-religious to violence. To achieve a mutual peace will require sustained efforts at educating all believers about the truths in other religions and downplaying radical ideologies.

**Read the article**

### **Towards an Ethics of Solidarity**

The fifth World Social Forum was held in January in Porto Alegre, Brazil, bringing together groups from civil society who are interested in combating the ill-effects of capitalist imperialism. The following report covers a panel on "International ethics, religious conflicts and peace", whose emphasis was the relationship of religion to violent conflict and how violence can be overcome.

**Read the article**

### **Fundamentalism: A Way to Peacebuilding?**

Egyptian activist and URI Global Council member Dr. Mohamed Mosaad critiques attempts at fighting "fundamentalism" by shutting down discourse. Instead he proposes that fundamentalism, in particular Islamic fundamentalism that promotes violence between religions, should be countered by likewise returning to the holy books (the fundamentals) in true intra-religious dialogue.

**Read the article**

### **Review: Moral Imagination: the Art and Soul of Building Peace**

URI Global Support Staff member Barbara Hartford reviews John Paul Lederach's *Moral Imagination: the Art and Soul of Building Peace*, wherein he asks "How do we transcend the cycles of violence that bewitch our human community while still

living in them?"

### **Read the article**

## **URI Global Council Endorses Darfur Unity Statement**

The United Religions Initiative Global Council in March voted to endorse the Darfur Unity Statement in recognition of the continuing necessity for international intervention in the Darfur region of Sudan. Originally signed by over 100 non-governmental agencies in July of 2004, the Save Darfur Coalition's Unity Statement remains relevant today with over two million refugees in need of aid and death toll estimates in the region now exceeding 300,000.

### **Read the article**

## **Interview: Annie Imbens-Fransen, Feminist Theologian**

Annie Imbens-Fransen is a Feminist theologian. In 1986, she founded the Foundation for Pastoral Care for Women to provide pastoral care and counseling to sexually abused women with a religious trauma. She has published extensively on the impact of a religious education on the lives of women, including the books: *Christianity and Incest and God in Women's Lives*. She has given lectures and workshops at national and international conferences and symposia, and participated in exchange programs in China and South Africa. She convened the Research and Development Group - Religious Rights and Responsibilities to prepare the first draft of the URI Charter and offered the first concept for a non-hierarchical and organic organizational structure of URI. She is the initiator and coordinator of the URI Council for women. For the past several years she served as a member of the URI Europe board and the URI Global Council.

### **Read the article**

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