



URI eUpdate for January 2003

The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of the United Religions Initiative

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1. Message from Charles Gibbs, URI Executive Director

As I look back at 2002, I see an abundant return on our investment – human and financial – in URI. We grew from 170 to 200 Cooperation Circles with over 25,000 members engaged in enduring, daily interfaith cooperation to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings. Their efforts don't make the international news. But they do make the local news in Pakistan, in Bali, in Zimbabwe, in Brazil and in other countries all over the world. More importantly, they make a difference. They offer hopeful, effective models of people of different faiths working together for the good of all.

Read the full report online at

<http://www.uri.org/abouturi/edrreport/index.asp>

2. Philanthropy

By Rick Murray, Manager of Resource Development

URI enters the New Year with the positive momentum generated during the last quarter of 2002. Our network of potential donors is continuing to

expand. Due to the financial crunch that URI (along with many other nonprofits) experienced in 2002, there is currently an intense focus on fundraising. We are reaching out to all people in the URI family, asking for continued financial support as well as any and all contacts that could be of assistance.

Although many nonprofit organizations reported that giving was down 40-60% in 2002 from usual levels, URI maintained its donation levels. This is a tremendous testimony to the support of our existing donor base as well as the compelling mission of URI. Our thanks go out to all of our donors.

We are also grateful for the current, passionate efforts of many others within the URI family who are calling upon contacts all over the world to substantially increase our donor base. Please contact Rick Murray **rmurray@uri.org** with any fundraising contacts or ideas.

In the world we find ourselves living, URI's purpose and principles are clearly becoming more and more vital. Financial resources continue to be needed as we grow and expand our global initiative. Thank you all for your attention to our financial sustainability.

To donate online, visit

<http://www.uri.org/philanthropy/donateindex.asp>

3. Peacebuilding

Buenos Aires, Argentina - December 18th Demonstration for Peace

Excerpts from a report by Maria Eugenia Crespo, Regional Coordinator for Latin America, and member of the Asociacion Intercultural Dialogo CC in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Facing the possibility of violent demonstrations marking the first anniversary of unrest due to the economic and social situation in Argentina, Maria and her CC proposed an unprecedented national interfaith peace action.



At 7 pm, thousands of people all over the country rang church bells, blew horns from synagogues, and intoned Islamic call to prayer. Everyone sang and played their hymn together, on radio, TV, and in gatherings. Children and elders, religious leaders and grassroots together asked for peace with justice, equity and work for everybody.

“Please do keep praying for peace in our country,” asks Maria. “I want to thank you because I could use all I have learned with you for the good of my country. If I hadn’t had you all backing me spiritually and inspiring me, I wouldn’t have dared to propose such a simple but strong gesture in the Argentine Dialogue Table—it was a kind of a balm to my wounded country.”

Read the full report at

<http://www.uri.org/regionalnews/lamerica/argentina1.asp>

4. Membership News

Jews, Christians, and Muslims Meet Each Other in Germany

Excerpts from a report by Karimah Stauch, Global Council Trustee and Vice-President of the German Muslim-League Bonn CC

The German-Muslim League CC initiated an interfaith conference held on November 1-3, 2002 at Arnoldshain, in co-operation with the Evangelical Academy, Arnoldshain and the Thomas Morus Academy, Frankfurt. Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz is President of the German Muslim-League Bonn CC.

Eighty men and women of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths attended the conference that addressed the topic of “The Strange in Judaism, Christianity, Islam.” There were lectures from the perspectives of the three religions by scholars and community leaders. There was also a moving vocal presentation of Yiddish songs and a cabaret show where the audience joined together in non-stop laughter. The conference was planned to encompass the prayer times of the three religions: the Muslim Friday Prayer, Jewish Sabbath celebrations, a Muslim-Sufi Dhikr, and a Christian Sunday service. Participants expressed their happiness and feeling of enrichment and many ideas came up for further cooperation.

The conference will occur again in 2003. Organizers hope that it will become a yearly event. The German Muslim-League CC is conscious of the importance of continuity in dialogue and will support the project whole-heartedly.

The German Muslim-League CC organizes many regular Christian-Muslim happenings. The first of our programs can be found on our website www.muslimliga.de. For current events go to <http://members.aol.com/dmlbonn/selbst/termine.html>, for past events go to <http://members.aol.com/dmlbonn/selbst/aktivver.html>.

Read the full report at

<http://www.uri.org/regionalnews/europe/germany1.asp>

Contact URI

The United Religions Initiative
P.O. Box 29242
San Francisco, CA 94129
USA
Web: uri.org
Phone: +1.415.561.2300
Fax: +1.415.561.2313
Email: <mailto:office@uri.org>

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