



Interfaith and Peacebuilding Quotes

The important thing is not to live for peace work but to live for God. That is after all, obviously, the vocation for peace work, where action is the prayer.

Heidi Rautionmaa, URI leader - European Women of Faith Network in the 2010 Multi-faith Women's Calendar

Teach this triple truth to all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity.

Buddha

[Creator], you offer peace as a gift
and peace as a responsibility...

Give us the grace to reach out for peace,
to have attitudes of peace,
that our words may be words of peace,
that our works may be works of peace.

Then may we build the peace that we and our nations need.

Monseñor Pedro Rubiano Sáenz, Columbia

This could be the time for people of all faiths to move beyond ancient hostilities and suspicions and to discover the untapped potential of cooperation.

Bishop Bill Swing - Congratulatory Message to President Barack Obama upon winning the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize

This experience taught me that when life stories are shared one-on-one and in small groups, people discover what they have in common instead of their differences. So I personally connect very deeply to URI's mission.

Debra Ballinger Bernstein, URI Associate Executive Director

And the work of generosity shall be peace; and the effect of generosity will be quietness and security forever. Isaiah 32:17.

Shared by Rebecca Tobias, URI North American Trustee

It is also an idea whose time has come for all member states of the United Nations to focus on the enormous costs of war and armament and how these resources could be used much better to create a better future for the children of the world, to alleviate poverty, end hunger, do research to find a cure for HIV/AIDS and cancer, achieve the millennium development goals, diminish the risks of war and support the effort of peace building throughout the world.

Ambassador Mussie Hailu, URI Regional Coordinator, Africa – Excerpt from letter to Ambassadors of all member states of the United Nations

A lot of littles make a much.

Reverend Doctor Dale Turner

A just peace includes not only civil and political rights – it must encompass economic security and opportunity. For true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want.

President Barack Obama - Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, December 2009

To be able to grow URI in impact and sustainability – to change the world – we must invite, expect, support, connect and communicate impactful action by our CCs, individually and as a global network...We must cherish and sustain the deep spirit and heart that gave birth to URI. We must match that spirit and heart with a new level of organizational excellence that will help the URI community realize our highest aspirations that the people of the world might live in peace... And may we never shrink back from our commitment to change the world.

Charles Gibbs, URI Executive Director

It is my fervent wish that every one of us can become aware of the inter-connectedness of all existence, and that we might each pause enough to experience the miracle of consciousness. In this experience of and in this awareness of our inter-connectedness, we might discover that there is no space at all for envy, hatred or thought of revenge. Only for Love.

George Leonard, writer - USA

Each of us in our different religions and traditions have different ways of dealing with the pain of the past, and I think it is important to remember and respect these different paths...

Sarah Talcott Blair, URI Youth Program Director

Religions are based on scripture, which is mostly poetry.

So it only makes sense that religious conflict must be resolved through poetry, and not through politics, negotiation, or war.

I propose that all religious conflicts be redefined poetically, so that they can be resolved without bloodshed, winners, or losers.

to let's sharpen our pencils, not our swords; send missives, not missiles;

and apply our minds to metaphor, simile, rhyme, meter, and prosody,

but not pomposity, animosity, ferocity, atrocity, or monstrosity.

Hugh Mann, M.D. - USA

Negotiation becomes possible when the needs and interests of all those involved and affected by the conflict are legitimated and articulated...The underdog party will (of course and necessarily) need to pursue confrontation and advocacy in order to have an equal voice in any kind of peace and reconciliation process. Until that is achieved, fair and equitable solutions cannot be reached through mediation.

Cynthia Sampson, URI Environment Satellite

Nobody can build sustainable peace alone in this world, we need to network with other stake holders even the government of Nigeria.

Rev. Patrick Lumumba, URI member, Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative CC

I think we should try and agree to understand" not agree to disagree because there is no agreement then. Agreeing to disagree is still a conflicting statement which lacks respect for one another or most important of all understanding.

P.K McCary, URI Global Council Secretary

We are what we pay attention to. Sadly, most of the time we are not attending to the world or ourselves. Psychologists estimate we have sixty thousand to seventy thousand thoughts a day, 99 percent of which are more or less what we thought yesterday...

Mary Pipher, Ph.D., in an excerpt from her book, Seeking Peace: Chronicles of the Worst Buddhist in the World

I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy.

Rabindranath Tagore

When we build a culture of understanding and uphold human dignity, we build a better world. We live in a changing and interconnected world, where local events can have an impact globally and international events can also have a local impact... Globalization continues to transform our societies, bringing gains for many but leaving too many others untouched and discontent. These 21st-century facts compel us to strengthen cooperation – to expand the space for dialogue. As religious leaders, you have an essential role to play in ensuring that the values of equality, tolerance and mutual respect, which lie at the core of all the world's greatest religions, are defended, promoted and used to truly enrich our societies. You can encourage dialogue that respects the importance of tradition but also embraces change. You can foster contacts and create conditions that will lead to sustainable peace, social justice and cultural cohesion.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at the April 2010 World Summit of Religious Leaders

Let us examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many think it unreal. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable... that mankind is doomed... that we are gripped by forces we cannot control. We need not accept that view. Our problems are manmade... therefore; they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man's reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable... and we believe they can do it again.

President Kennedy's commencement address at American University, June 10, 1963

Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it.

Marian Anderson

I have always believed that music inhabits a world set apart from politics, religious differences or prejudice of any kind. Throughout my career I have made a point of playing concerts in challenging places, such as the USSR and Northern Ireland in the 1970s, Israel in the 1990s and very recently Morocco. Every concert was an enjoyable event for us all and, as I found in Morocco just this last Wednesday, it is always a great experience playing to a new audience in a new country, getting a wonderful warm reception, and hearing the 30,000-strong audience singing along to lyrics that are not in their native tongue. Music is, and always will be, a universal language, free from boundaries. It can and does inspire unity and builds bridges between people, and I will continue to play concerts anywhere in the world where I can encourage that unity.

Elton John

I still firmly believe in Mahatma Gandhi's vision that in the war against war women must lead—they must teach the art of peace to the warring world. The success of Gandhi lay in convincing large sections of Indians that societies become civilized only when men imbibe some of the positive feminine qualities- such as nurturance and revulsion at violence instead of masculinizing women and making them as adept at bloodshed as men.

Elana Rozenman

Dialogue demands more courage than waging war.
It takes you to that uncomfortable space where
you have to question your own assumptions and,
rather than speak on other people's behalf,
truly listen to what they have to say,
take it into consideration, and
present your own views in a way that
addresses the misunderstandings that have arisen.

Haider Al-Mosawi

This is the shortest way to a political solution: through people's hearts.

Dr. Leila Alieva, President Center for National and International Studies - Baku, Azerbaijan

Solidarity, compassion, caring, communion and loving. Such values and inner powers can lay the foundation of a new paradigm of civilization, the civilization of the humanity reunited in the Common House, on the Planet Earth.... Our mission is to celebrate the greatness of Creation and connect it again to the Core where it came from and to where it will go, with care, lightness, joy, reverence and love.

Leonardo Boff, Brazil

The underlying assumption is that the abolition of nuclear weapons is much more than one nation's or one religion's problem. It is a life issue, a civilization issue that requires a worldwide response by all who are morally alert and spiritually compassionate. The governments which have the weapons or which want the weapons must hear the cries and demands of the living.

Bishop W. Swing in introducing the Voices for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons CC

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Hugh Mann

Religious fundamentalism isn't based on reverence of God, but on fear (and loathing) of a God who is heard to say, "Love me or burn in hell!" The great wisdom teachers tell us to put fear aside; the great religious institutions named for those teachers largely gain their power promoting that fear.

Tom Mahon

All mankind is from Adam and Eve; an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor has a non-Arab any superiority over an Arab; also, a white has no superiority over a black person, nor has a black person any superiority over a white person -- except by piety and good action.

Prophet Muhammad, Messenger of Islam, A.D. 632

The fundamental difference between creating and problem solving is simple. In problem solving we seek to make something we do not like go away. In creating, we seek to make what we truly care about exist.

Peter Senge