

INTERACTION

URI's e-newsletter

December 2010

Message from Charles

Dear Friends,

Greetings of love and peace, and welcome to the re-launch of URI's email newsletter, newly named *InterAction*. This first issue comes to you in the midst of a holiday season for many religions and cultures. Diwali, Eid al-Adha, Christmas, Chanukah and more. It is a season not just for giving and sharing, but also for giving thanks.



With each passing year, I feel the call to live in gratitude more keenly. A friend in the Konko church once challenged me to say "thank you" a thousand times a day during my difficult times. These are indeed difficult times, but we at URI have so much to be grateful for: The courage and innovation of our Cooperation Circles; the hard work and dedication of our volunteers and staff; and the generosity of our donors, who even at a time of financial crisis continue to support our shared vision of a more peaceful and equitable world.

As you read in this issue about URI's new initiatives and growing reach please consider renewing your support or making a new donation.

In gratitude, and with best wishes for your health and happiness in the New Year,

Charles P. Gibbs
Executive Director

[GIVE](#)

URI in Action

Isaam Asaad wanted to do something. It was December 2008, and bombs thought to be aimed at Christians were going off in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. “I decided that I am responsible for doing something, to call for a cry against such sectarian clashes,” recalled Assad, an Iraqi human rights activist and university professor. He began searching for an organization that could help him work toward his dream of a new Iraq, an Iraq of peace and co-existence.



[Read more](#)

Perspective

The end of the year is always a time for reflection. What have we done this year? Where have we been and where will we be tomorrow?

We are “reaching the unreachable.”

Biswadeb Chakraborty, one of URI’s regional coordinators for India, counts among his missions “reaching the unreachable and supporting those who have access to nothing.” His travels to tribal lands in remote regions of India, along with outreach to Somalia, the Congo and Iraq by the Africa and Middle East teams, helped bring more than 70 new Cooperation Circles (CCs) into the URI network since the start of the year, a record for URI. We are entering 2011 with more than 500 interfaith organizations in 78 countries working for peace, for human rights, for health, education and so much more.

We are working together.

Something else is happening, too. In India this fall, a group of CCs in western India overcame fierce resistance to launch a coordinated, region-wide poster campaign against the deeply entrenched practice of killing of female babies. They succeeded in getting positive media coverage on what has been a largely taboo subject.

In Uganda, URI Regional Coordinator Despina Namwembe won a grant for a multi-CC project to promote non-violent elections. Several CCs there also collaborated on a campaign against parasitic jiggers, treating more than 500 patients and handing out health kits. And in Pakistan, CCs across the county mobilized en masse [to help flood victims](#), providing health and sanitation services, food aid, shelter and more.

We are making a difference.

These initiatives and many more in the pipeline tell us that URI is making a real difference, helping local groups join forces to take on regional, national and even global issues that affect them all. **This is the power of URI.**

[GIVE](#)

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Diwali: lighting up the world

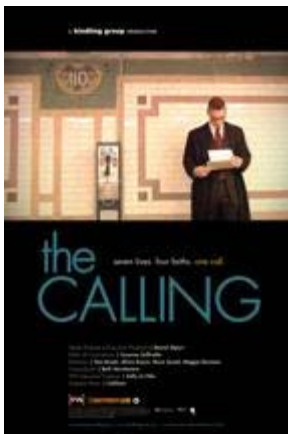


Faith 2 Faith CC in the U.K. celebrates Diwali

Diwali, the “festival of lights” is perhaps India’s most well known tradition, and one of the most important Hindu festivals. But Diwali, a five-day celebration of the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, is not just an Indian, or even a Hindu, holiday.

[Read more](#)

What’s Your Calling?



URI is helping launch a new film, *The Calling*, that offers an inside look at the lives of young Americans of different faiths who are training for religious leadership.

[Read more](#)

Highlights at URI.org

[URI's newest members](#)

[URI members around the world observe the International Day of Peace](#)

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