

Forcing Change



Uniting Religions for World Change: The G8 World Religions Summit

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

A sacred fire was lit. Mother Earth, we were told, needs to hear that we love her, so give a “prayer of gratitude” to the Earth; “Because out of Mother Earth comes all we need to live...she gives us the food, the water, the medicines, and the teachings.”

We were asked to privately perform a water ritual, for this will give strength to Mother Earth. Everything that’s alive, “even the water” it was explained to the delegates and observers, has the spirit. We were told that religiously speaking, “there is not only one way, there is many ways” – and to go to the sacred fire and “invoke the spirits.” Drummers summoned the power of the eagle spirit, because it brings “the spirit of love, it brings vision. The Eagle carries our wishes and our prayers.” And this eagle spirit will tell the Great Spirit of the wonderful things happening in this gathering.

And what a gathering! As an observer to the 2010, G8 World Religions Summit (WRS), I listened as the opening ceremonies set the tone for this remarkable event. The Secretary General of the WRS, Dr. James Christie – the Dean of Theology at the University of Winnipeg – welcomed us as religious equals, stating that what was important was that we “offer our service, and ourselves, and our lives” to the “God we know by so many names.” (1)

World
Religions
Summit 2010

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Carl Teichrib, Editor.

This multi-faith perspective was evident in full color; Hindu swamis in flowing orange attire, members of the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs dressed in desert garb, Jewish yamakas, cross pendants and clerical collars, Shinto robes, Orthodox priests in black, Salvation Army uniforms, and Baha'i leaders and evangelical Christians in business suits. Religions from every corner of the planet were represented. Even so, very few people have heard about the G8 World Religions Summit, held in Winnipeg, Manitoba from June 21-23.

Compared to the G8/G20 political summits occurring days later in Toronto and Huntsville, Ontario, the WRS – the official religious parallel – was an ultra-tame affair. The security budget for the Winnipeg event was zero; nobody burnt any cars, and no windows were smashed. The only “protestors” were a group of Mennonites who, a few days before the Summit began, sang songs of support at a downtown park. (2) In fact, many of the international participants had “never heard of Winnipeg” before. (3)

Nevertheless, what occurred in Winnipeg will likely have a far more real impact at the local level than what transpired in Toronto. Why do I say this? Because of the direct *lines of influence* that radiate from the World Religions Summit right down to individual bodies. It's a top-down strategy ensuring that religious people will fall in line with an emerging global framework – a type of world theology along with an international system of socialism. And it's going to work, particularly in the Christian community.

“We Give Thanks”

The history of the G8 World Religions Summit goes back to 2005. That year, Jim Wallis of Sojourners – a left wing Christian advocacy group – teamed up with the Archbishop of Canterbury to “raise the voices of the faith leaders of the world in unity and in a call for justice.” (4) The 2005 event was a small, ecumenical affair made up of representatives from Catholic groups, the National Association of Evangelicals, World Vision, the Salvation Army, the Mennonite Central Committee, the World Evangeli-

Points to Ponder About Christian Interfaith Involvement

1) The interfaith approach is rationally directionless. If all religions are equally valid or hold some common level of spiritual authenticity, as the interfaith movement asserts, then all religions are ultimately baseless. Therefore, the non-believer can logically reject Christianity as a meaningless sect among many meaningless faiths. For by acknowledging another religion as a vehicle that proclaims the revelation of God, even *tentatively*, the exclusive nature of God as revealed in the Bible (Isaiah 45:18-22; John 14:6-7) can no longer be viewed as exclusively true. The door has now been opened to consider any other spiritual claim as legitimate; and to not accept these other claims would demonstrate an intolerant exclusivity. Either Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, the great I AM – the only true God – or He's only one way among many and His claim is false. It's an all-or-nothing position (see Joshua 24:14-24).

2) The interfaith position muddies the Christian mission of bringing the good news of Jesus Christ as God incarnate come to redeem sinful humanity. Inter-religious bridge building bolsters the idea (continued on page 17)

cal Alliance, and other church bodies.

These leaders released an “Action on Poverty” document calling for governments to alleviate poverty, and for faith communities to generate the necessary moral will. The text itself was very short and ambiguous, with a underlying socialist slant.

The next year, the G8 religious summit took place in Moscow and a host of other religions contributed; leaders from the Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, and Shinto communities – along with Christians, hashed out another declaration, this time calling for a “more systemic partnership of religious leaders with the United Nations.” In 2007 at Cologne, the emphasis was on the UN Millennium Development goals and the support for a worldwide climate change “protection agreement.” 2008 and 2009 saw the religious leaders meeting in Sapporo/Kyoto/Osaka, Japan and Rome, Italy.

Sapporo’s declaration called for religions to unite in a “commitment to peace.” It also recognized that “religious communities are the world’s largest social networks which reach into the furthest corners of the earth.” In other words, religions are powerful actors in the global field. Hence, the Sapporo text demanded a system of “Shared Security” based on interdependence, the “mysterious giftedness of all existence,” the establishment of an “Earth Fund dedicated to environmental protection,” and a binding global climate treaty. Another document was released in Japan, recognizing that the “dharmic, pantheistic and ancestor traditions of Eastern societies remain a practical tool... in defence of the environment.” And religious diversity was expounded as part of the divine, cosmic order – therefore, “we seek to be considered equal partners.” (5)

Finally in Rome, faith leaders focused on the worsening global economy and broadly called for a “new financial pact,” without really explaining what it would entail. To be fair to the Rome event, the entire summit was overshadowed by the almost simultaneous release of Pope Benedict’s encyclical *Charity in Truth*, which shook the international community in its brazen call for a world political authority “with teeth.” (See the *Forcing Change* report, “Sowing the Seeds of Global Government,” Volume 3, Issue 8).

Winnipeg, as a potential hosting city for the World Religions Summit, entered the picture in 2008. At Sapporo, Dr. James Christie, a representative from the Canadian Council of Churches, recommended Winnipeg for 2010. It was accepted.

Dr. Christie, who’s the Dean of Theology at the University of Winnipeg, wasn’t the only Canadian at Sapporo. Another official from the Canadian Council of Churches, Dr. Karen Hamilton was present, and these two formed the nucleus for the 2010 event, which was held at the University of Winnipeg



Under the surface of this emerging Summit was an interesting, behind-the-scenes matrix. Christie, Hamilton, and the President of the University of Winnipeg – Lloyd Axworthy, who gave the initial go-ahead for the event – are all top officials with the World Federalist Movement (WFM). Axworthy is the President of the WFM, Christie the Council Chair, and Hamilton is the WFM Executive Chair.

For those not familiar with the WFM, it's the largest and most influential pro-world government advocacy group in existence. Over the years the WFM has openly called for a world parliament, an international military force, a global tax regime, and a host of systems designed to legally bind nations under a central governing structure. The WFM also has a history of working with global interfaith groups, such as the United Religions Initiative, in bridging politics and religion at the international level. (For more information as the event location, see the article "Winnipeg, World Federalists, and World Religions" in this *Forcing Change* report).

So Winnipeg would host the Summit, organized by key officials from the Canadian Council of Churches whose worldview is saturated in a world government context. Moreover, the spiritual component is completely couched in an interfaith mindset – all religions are carriers of truth, all spiritual expressions are divinely valid. Not only was this interfaith perspective evident in the other G8 religious gatherings and throughout the Winnipeg event, it was expressed in the 2010 WRS *Resource Kit* with a recommended prayer,

"We give thanks for the world's religions and the richness they bring to our lives... We give thanks for our Baha'i brothers and sisters, for their genuine openness and desire for unity... We give thanks for our Buddhist sisters and brothers, for their sense of peace and relinquishing of self... We give thanks for our Christian brothers and sisters, for their message of love and ethic of compassion... We give thanks for our Hindu sisters and brothers, for their open-hearted acceptance of others and kindly disposition toward those of other faiths... We give thanks for our Humanist brothers and sisters, for their emphasis on the dignity and worth of all persons... We give thanks for every faith tradition, named and unnamed, for the variety and richness of their spiritualities, for their united quest for truth... ever unite us as one community..." (For the full prayer, see the "Ever Unite Us" article in this *Forcing Change* report).

Dr. Karen Hamilton with Swami Saraswati and Swami Avdheshanand Giri at the G8 WRS in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Biblical Christianity runs counter to this “ever unite us,” all-religions-are-valid claim. This is evident in both the Old and New Testaments, where God expresses in no-uncertain terms His displeasure with those who flirt with other faiths. 2 Corinthians 6 rhetorically asks; What harmony is there between Christ and Baal? How can there be fellowship between light and darkness? What agreement can be found between the temple of the Living God and idols? (See 2 Cor. 6:14-16).

Unfortunately, Christian groups were involved with the WRS, even at the planning stages, giving the interfaith movement credibility. And it wasn’t just the Canadian Council of Churches, but Sojourners and World Vision, and Canada’s largest evangelical umbrella group; the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC).

In a March 2010 interview with *Christian Week*, Karan Hamilton explained that the EFC was a full partner in the World Religions Summit; “In fact, they could be said to have been the first partner in.”

Such a move, it was recognized, could create leeriness in some evangelicals who support the EFC. When asked about this point of contention, EFC stated; “Interfaith is absolutely a place where the EFC could work when we’re talking about social justice.” (6)

Bringing in the Canadian evangelical community was a *strategic move*, as was inviting other Christian groups. Dr. Hamilton explained,

“They come by virtue of their position and that’s been a very deliberate strategy. So the Archbishop of Canterbury is invited... Jim Wallis from Sojourners is coming... The general secretary of the All African Conference of Churches will be one of the plenary speakers. His position means that he represents – institutionally, structurally, organizationally, however you want to put it – the Christians of Africa, which is half the population of Africa.” (7)

What all of this represents, from the first event in 2005 until Winnipeg, is the intentional move within Christendom to politically unite with other faiths “in one community.” The motivator: Social Justice – world peace, care for the Earth, and alleviating poverty.

And who doesn’t want peace, a healthy environment, and the poor raised above their poverty? These are admirable goals. But something else is going on, raising the question: What does the Christian community have to sacrifice in the name of interfaith partnering for “social justice”?

Not surprisingly, the only time the name “Jesus Christ” came up at the 2010 WRS was when He was compared with Buddha and Mohammad as a religious figure. Nobody dared present Him as “the way, the truth and the life... the only way to the Father.” (John 14:6). Love, compassion, and “spiritual law” were tossed about freely in the speeches. But nobody was willing to rock the boat by venturing into what Francis Schaffer called “true truth.”

The interfaith approach, by default, recognizes Jesus as one spiritual leader in a long line of religious reformers. That's all. Nothing more. Hence, at global interfaith events, like the one that took place in Winnipeg, Christian representatives remain silent on the subject of Jesus Christ *as truth*, "...the only way to the Father." For to do otherwise would be divisive and contrary to the ideal of "one community." By default, the Christian community has to sacrifice Truth.

Therefore, it was no surprise that on different occasions I heard participants criticize Christian missions and Christian "fundamentalists." The representative of the Pacific Council of Churches told us that everything is inter-connected, and that we need to revisit the ancient [pagan] religions and myths – those ancient ways that were "deliberately pushed aside" by Christian missionaries – in order to understand and appreciate this interdependence. Another speaker explained that it was time to put aside the past dogmas of traditional faiths, and that the litmus test for religions in this global era was interdependence and transcendent spirituality.

Religions, we were repeatedly told, needed to unify if the planet is to survive.

Global Designs

The main theme for the Winnipeg summit was the UN Millennium Development Goals, primarily the alleviating of poverty, care for the Earth, and the building of peace cultures.

All three concerns are noble in-and-of themselves, and nobody in his or her right mind wants poverty, environmental degradation, or conflict – regardless of political or economic stripe. How we respond to these issues, however, will determine what type of world we live in. Consider the suggested ideas and methodologies.

1) **Poverty:** To invest 0.7% of GDP in development assistance, cancel debts in poor countries, hinder speculative money and flight capital, combat corruption, and foster conditions for small businesses – among other ideas expressed in the final document. So too, the final text called for access to basic needs such as food, water, health care, education and economic opportunities. On the surface these suggestions seem beneficial, *and they may be in the right context*.

What was troubling was the background these ideas sprang from: The scrapping of industrial-based capitalism and the formation of a *new economic order* – the evils of oil, the need for a global financial tax, and the notion that poverty is the result of "wealthier sectors of society." The rich owe it to the poor, and governments need to level the playing field by redistributing the wealth. As one participant explained through an allegory, "it's not about having a bike for each, it's about learning to share one bike in community."

Throughout the three days it was evident that a form of international socialism was the heart-beat of "poverty alleviation." It was the same old Marxist line of class warfare and the Leninist use of "social justice" – politically leverage the poor in order to bring down capitalism, all for good intentions, of course. But it never works that way, because the goal is a new *political and economic order*; the establishment of a new ruling system in the name of "justice" and "peace."

One master is swapped for another. Historically speaking, over taxation, onerous regulations, and more coercive means of “wealth redistribution” do indeed level the playing field. All become poor, and those who were previously poor sink even lower.

The President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Bruce Clemenger, did ask that the role of government remain limited. It was a statement I agree with, but in the socialist context of the World Religions Summit, it was a mute point. Instead, religions were asked to create political momentum for global financial governance.

As economics professor, Eric Schansberg stated in his book, *How Poor Government Policy Harms the Poor*, “The solution for the poor is not more government; more often than not, the problem *is* government.” He aptly described such a system as one “of the politicians, by the bureaucrats, for the interest groups.” (8)

[Note: The opposite of social justice from a Christian perspective is Biblical justice and Christian compassion. Biblical justice: Equal treatment by law (Leviticus 19:15). Biblical compassion: Seeing the need and independently acting with compassion to meet the need (Good Samaritan). Social justice, on the other hand, is seeing a need and then leveraging the situation to achieve a political end. Christians who say they’re involved in “social justice” by working in an orphanage or soup kitchen have miss-applied the term; they’re engaged in *Christian compassion*.]

2) Earth Care: The entire World Religions Summit revolved on this one cause, save the Earth. Everyone, it seemed, whistled to this central tune: Man is destroying Mother Earth, and we need to enter into a revolutionary new “communion with the planet.” Human caused global warming is bringing about greater change than anything else in the past 300 million years, at least, that’s what we were told. As Pandit Roopnauth Sharma of the Hindu Federation said, “we are the biggest parasites on Earth.”

There was nothing subtle about Earth Care at the WRS. Climate change is bringing us to the point of no return, and the evil west – with evil capitalism and evil competition and evil market economies – are to blame, and by default Western Christianity is thrown into this mix of planetary guilt. We desperately need to turn to native spirituality, Shintoism, African animism, Germanic paganism, and other Earth-friendly faiths. At one point a delegate proposed that all the religions of the world join together and have a massive vision quest, a mystical rite-of-passage modeled after native spirituality; “it would be the biggest vision quest in the world.” Why? Because indigenous cultures have been loyal to the Earth, and that’s what we need now – a spiritually acceptable Earth ethic. Jim Wallis of Sojourners called it a “new vision.”

His Holiness, Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia said that climate change must be tackled from a moral, ethical, and spiritual perspective. It was clear from those who participated that we need a “gospel of respecting nature.”

Environmental degradation does happen, and the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a graphic case in point. Iceland’s Eyjafjallajökull volcano is another example, but then again, if nature

harms nature, how do we define it? Oh, I forgot... it's Gaia's anger at the human race, a theme that played out at the WRS.

“Our Mother Earth, who is suffering so much that she is able to bring the richest person in this world to his knees when he was unable to fly because of the volcanic ash; that's how powerful she is, and she will show more of her power.”

The common theme of a spiritually generated, global Earth-ethic was put forward on a number of occasions. This was expressed in the final document in a way that parallels the Gaian philosophy (Mother Earth is a living entity), saying that religions see “the planet as a unified whole, not unlike the cells of a body...deeply interdependent.”

Economics came into the picture too: We need a new system of eco-justice, where the first-world countries pay an eco-debt to developing nations. Hints of this are found in the Final Draft of the working document, *A Time for Inspired Leadership and Action*. The wording was more forceful, however, in the first draft; “industrialized countries have caused a disproportionate amount of environmental damage; they now owe an ecological debt to developing countries, to all life and to the future.” As the final text says, “We must move beyond short-term political interests and arguments over who pays.”



Ken Bowers (center), Secretary-General of the National Assembly of the Baha'is, USA.

One voice at the World Religions Summit challenged these assumptions, the representative from the Church of England, Nick Baines. He was the only one with the courage to ask, “Who will pay?” Who will give up their cell phones? Who will give up on travel? The questions were pointed at the participants. Mr. Baines was right – we need to live in the real world. While Mr. Baines made a valid point, I'm afraid it largely fell on deaf ears.

The bottom line was expressed by the representative from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank: Our churches, temples and mosques need to guide behavioral changes in their constituents. The language of faith, another delegate told us, is a powerful tool to incite global change. Nothing less than a “global systemic change” is necessary – ethics, values, and spiritual priorities must shift if Mother Earth is going to survive. Faiths must unite in this ultimate cause. This was the central message.

3) Peace: The uniting of religions is a powerful symbol for world peace, and the final document called on nations to halt the arms race, invest in peace programs, stop ethnic cleansing, and curtail nuclear weapons. Nice sounding platitudes, but it didn't seem to carry much weight.

Somehow, the G8 World Religions Summit petered out in the discussions on peace. Not that it wasn't talked about, but it felt like the Summit had run out of time to address this issue in comparison to the sessions on Climate Change or Poverty. Part of the reason may have been that these other issues can be lumped into the broader context of peace.

One item of note did come up: R2P – the “Right to Protect.” What is R2P? The brainchild of Lloyd Axworthy and the World Federalist Movement, R2P holds that the international community has a responsibility to militarily intervene in situations where national governments fail to protect their own people. On the surface this seems well intentioned, but it opens up Pandora's Box in that a multitude of questionable excuses can be used to justify “intervention.” It is a concept that has the potential for grave abuses. From a World Federalist perspective, the Right to Protect becomes the legal justification for a world political authority to act militarily. The danger lurks in that the seeds of tyranny are often buried in the soil of good intentions. (For more on this topic, see *Forcing Change*, Vol. 2, Iss.7, “Kosovo and the International Community”).

In general, the notion of world peace seemed to orbit around co-existence and interdependence: the integration of all our institutions into a new whole, including religions. And leaders of world faiths become a type of global statesman.

What Does It All Mean?

The 2010 G8 World Religions Summit was geared to influence G8 and G20 leaders meeting days later. At the end of the three-day event, a closing ceremony was held with Shinto prayers for world peace and the coming together of one mind, and the final document, *A Time for Inspired Leadership and Action*, was turned over to a Canadian government representative. By the way, when the call for votes was made to accept this final document, it was unanimously adopted (see the end of this *Forcing Change* report for a copy of the text)

So did the Religions Summit make a difference to the heads of state meeting in Toronto? This is questionable.

But it will make a difference on two other fronts: First, as a global gathering of religious leaders, it legitimizes the interfaith approach as a “spiritually inspired” political voice. By its nature, this lends credence to the idea that world faiths can unite under one global system. Hence, a new standard is required for religious legitimacy – the litmus test is this; Does your religious views unite or divide? Christian participation in such a movement, whether intended or not, must downplay the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the “only way to the Father.” For to vocally stand on this claim would immediately brand oneself as intolerant of the new spiritual paradigm.

Secondly, the G8 Religions Summit may make a difference at local levels, depending on how hard the agenda is pushed by those umbrella groups who participated. And the push may not be overt, but rather pursued through more subtle language or programs that, on the surface, appear well intended. This does not mean that a person looks for a boogie-man under every bush, but it does demand diligence – for those groups who participated committed themselves to incite changes that reflect an interfaith/socialist perspective. This could best be described as Spiritual Marxism.

Finally, if you attend a church or are part of a Christian ministry that falls under one of the groups involved in this G8 event, *call them to account*. Be tactful yet truthful, and make your position known. And if the umbrella organization determines that the interfaith movement is now the new game to play, then your church or denomination has to ask some hard questions; Remain a member and contribute to this movement, or disassociate in respect to a higher Biblical calling.

Carl Teichrib is editor of *Forcing Change* (www.forcingchange.org), a monthly journal on world change issues from a Christian perspective.

Endnotes:

1. The quotes and speech materials used in this report have been taken from my audio copies of the WRS. If otherwise, the source is included in footnotes where appropriate.
2. Brenda Suderman, "A meeting of religious minds," *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 18, 2010. The "protestors" were members of the Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship Choir.
3. Ibid.
4. "History of the Interfaith Leaders' Summits," 2010 G8 World Religions Summit *Resource Kit*, p.13.
5. All of the previous G8 religious documents were given to Winnipeg delegates and observers in a single package.
6. Doug Koop, "World religions summit in Winnipeg will deliver message to G8," *Christian Week*, March 26, 2010, online edition.
7. Ibid.
8. D. Erc Schansberg, *How Poor Government Policy Harms the Poor* (Westview Press, 1996), p.230.

- “Ever Unite Us” - An Interfaith Prayer for the G8 World Religions Summit

Note: The following is a multi-faith prayer that was distributed in the 2010, G8 World Religions Summit *Resource Kit*. This kit and prayer was to be used in hosting pre-G8 Summit events, primarily interfaith dinners with invited Canadian politicians. Besides the prayer, the *Resource Kit* – a 17-page package – included a rough draft of the G8 WRS declaration, “A Time for Inspired Leadership and Action.”

For those who hold to the Biblical standard, the singularity of God (Isaiah 44:6-8) and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Son of God (John 14:6, Rev.1:8), the “Prayer of Thanksgiving” can only be viewed as an affront to truth.

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Religions of the World

Most religious traditions put an emphasis on thanksgiving. The prayer below gives grateful recognition to the unique and diverse gifts of the world’s spiritual traditions.

Reader: We give thanks for the world’s religions and the richness they bring to our lives.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Baha’i brothers and sisters, for their genuine openness and desire for unity.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Buddhist sisters and brothers, for their sense of peace and relinquishing of self.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Christian brothers and sisters, for their message of love and ethic of compassion.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Hindu sisters and brothers, for their open-hearted acceptance of others and kindly disposition toward those of other faiths.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Humanist brothers and sisters, for their emphasis on the dignity and worth of all persons.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Muslim sisters and brothers, for their commitment in prayer and faithfulness in worship.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Jain brothers and sisters, for their deep respect for life and practice of nonviolence.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Jewish sisters and brothers, for their enriching symbols of worship and cherishing of tradition.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, for their reverence of nature and their ancient and still-living culture.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Shinto brothers and sisters, for their affirmation of ritual and awareness of the natural world.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Sikh sisters and brothers, for their warm hospitality and public witness of faith.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Taoist brothers and sisters, for their sense of the connectedness of all things and pursuit of harmony.

People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Unitarian sisters and brothers, for their openness to truth and commitment to freedom, reason and tolerance.

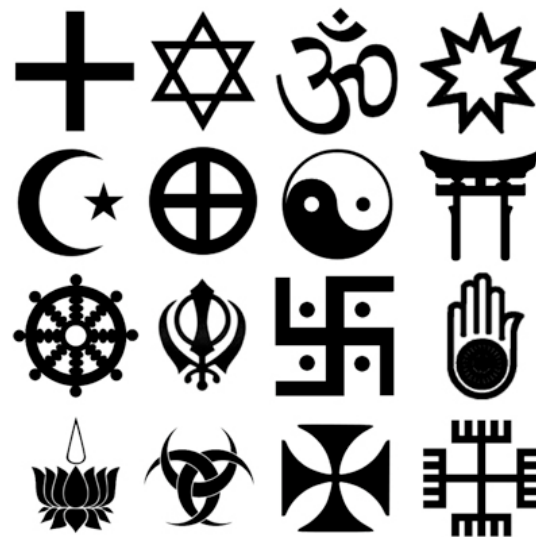
People: We give thanks.

Reader: We give thanks for our Zoroastrian sisters and brothers, for their devotion to right thought, right speech and right action.

People: We give thanks.

Leader: We give thanks for every faith tradition, named and unnamed, for the variety and richness of their spiritualities, for their united quest for truth, for their common dedication to the pursuit of peace, reconciliation and healing of the spirit.

Congregation: We give thanks. Ever unite us as one community of joy, hope, love and peace. Ever inspire us to live more genuinely and authentically, celebrating diversity, affirming unity, pursuing peace, not just for better relations among philosophies, but for a new and more just world. Amen.



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Winnipeg, World Federalists, and World Religions: *The New Geneva?*

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

What do the cities of London, Moscow, Cologne, Sapporo, and Rome have in common with Winnipeg, Manitoba? For anyone who knows Winnipeg, a climatically harsh city tucked in a corner of the Canadian prairies, you'd likely scoff at the notion that "Winterpeg" would be listed among the "great cities of the world." Yet, as of June 2010, Winnipeg was counted with the above mentioned world centers, for each of these cities have hosted, in turn, a meeting of the G8 World Religions Summit (WRS).

How Winnipeg was given the opportunity to host this event is an interesting side-story, one that demonstrates that there's more to the Canadian prairies than meets the eye.

As the capital city of Manitoba, Winnipeg is home to approximately 700,000 people. It's also home to the University of Winnipeg, and it was here that the 2010 World Religions Summit was held. Furthermore, two of the most influential players in the World Federalist Movement (WFM) – an international body lobbying for world government – are also key figures at the University of Winnipeg. And both individuals played significant roles at the WRS.

1) Dr. Lloyd Axworthy: Current President of the UofW, Mr. Axworthy was the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the UN Security Council during the late 1990s. He was also a behind-the-scenes player with the World Federalist Movement and helped kick-start the International Criminal Court as a WFM project. Furthermore, Axworthy is the one individual most responsible for promoting the R2P principle. R2P, or "Right to Protect" is the concept that national sovereignty can be superseded if a country cannot protect its own people, and that the United Nations then has the mandate to militarily and politically intervene. Dr. Axworthy is now President of the World Federalist Movement.

2) Dr. James Christie: Currently the Dean of Theology at the UofW, he also heads up the university's Global College – an institution promoting global governance. Mr. Christie has a long history of involvement with the world federalists. Currently, he's the Council Chair of the WFM. He's also the past president of the Canadian Council of Churches and a minister in the United Church of Canada. In fact, when he filled the pulpit in an Ottawa-based United Church, one of his parishioners was Lloyd Axworthy. (**Author's Note:** The first time I met Mr. Christie was during a joint World Federalist and United Religions Initiative event in Washington DC, 1999. The United Religions Initiative, a UN-linked interfaith program, was hoping to form a type of world parliament of religions, and was working towards a global summit. In this cause, it was seeking to partner with the World Federalist community. Mr. Christie was a speaker at this WFM/URI conference.)

But why Winnipeg? Here's the scoop.

Just before the 2008 World Religions Summit in Sapporo, Japan, James Christie and Dr. Axworthy were walking together after a convocation at Menno Simons College, a UofW partner school in Winnipeg. At the time, Mr. Christie was preparing to go to the Sapporo Summit, and while walking along, suggested to Axworthy that Winnipeg should host the 2010 event. Dr. Axworthy agreed, but stipulated that the Baha'i community needed to have a special voice at the Winnipeg Summit – especially regarding religious and human rights.

For those who are not familiar with the Baha'i faith, it's a Persian-based religion that actively promotes a one-world government with a single monetary system, complete with a world faith for all humanity. (1) Thus, the Baha'i community is one of the most vocal supporters of world government and global interfaithism, and Baha'i leaders are often found spearheading United Nations' conferences on global governance. The Baha'i community is also under persecution in Iran. Dr. Christie agreed with Axworthy's request.

At Sapporo, James Christie suggested that Winnipeg should host the 2010 Summit, and it was agreed upon. So after the 2009 G8 Religious Summit in Rome, the Italian Foreign Minister officially passed the baton to Winnipeg. In January of that year, planning began for the Manitoban event.

Another Canadian was at Sapporo; Karen Hamilton, now General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches and Executive Chair of the World Federalist Movement. (Are you seeing a pattern?). So for 2010, the main organizers of the G8 World Religions Summit were... Dr. James Christie and Dr. Karen Hamilton, with the event held in Dr. Axworthy's university. (Axworthy gave a keynote address pumping his R2P idea).

On Monday, June 21, Dr. Christie told attendees that Winnipeg was becoming the “new Geneva” – an idea postulated by Arthur V. Mauro, chairman of the Winnipeg Airport Authority. Part of the basis for this claim is the construction of the Museum for Human Rights, a massive edifice that is slated to open in 2012, putting Winnipeg on the map as an international “Human Rights” city. The World Religions Summit too adds to this distinction. As Christie explained, “This is a place where extraordinary things continue quietly to happen.”

Extraordinary things do happen in Winnipeg! Here are a few interesting tidbits about Manitoba's capital from both a religious and political/international perspective.



Religious:

- Winnipeg is located in the center of the continent, at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers – an historical meeting point for Native American tribes. According to the Anishnabe, there's a prophecy that "Representatives would come from all corners of the world, which would support the revealing of truth of our purposes and the meaning of our existence, and our responsibilities in taking care of the Earth." It was explained that this "sacred site" is the place "where the Great Spirit sat."
- Manitoba's legislative building, located close to downtown Winnipeg, was designed around occult and Masonic lines, complete with a Black Sun and proportionally aligned to Solomon's Temple. This fact, which has stared Manitobans in the face for decades, was finally revealed in 2006 through a series of articles in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Visitors to Winnipeg can now purchase a picture book highlighting the esoteric nature of the site (*The Hermetic Code: Unlocking One of Manitoba's Greatest Secrets* by Carolin Vesely). You can even take a "Hermetic Code" tour of the legislative building.
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of *Sherlock Holmes* fame visited Winnipeg in 1923 and proselytized "the cause of Spiritualism." While in Winnipeg, Doyle connected with a group of prominent citizens who had formed a Spiritualist circle for the purpose of experimenting with psychic phenomena. Speaking of the city, Doyle noted; "I came away with the conclusion that Winnipeg stands very high among the places we have visited for its psychic possibilities." (2)
- Winnipeg is religiously diverse; numerous Christian churches dot the city, there's a vibrant Jewish community, in 2005 a Hindu Temple opened, and in 2007 the Grand Mosque opened its doors. Aboriginal spirituality is very active and is strongly promoted under the umbrella of aboriginal culture.

Political/International:

- Winnipeg was the hometown of Sir William Stephenson, best known as Intrepid, one of the most famous spies of the twentieth century.
- The Canadian headquarters of NORAD, the North American Aerospace Defense Command, is located in Winnipeg. Furthermore, this site is the alternative NORAD control center to the headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- The International Centre for Infectious Diseases, a world-class research facility dealing with communicable diseases, is located in Winnipeg – putting the city on the map in terms of major world-health issues.
- As a forerunner to the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio, the Manitoba government hosted the 1990 World Environment Energy and Economic Conference. Over 3000 delegates from around the planet gathered in Winnipeg to discuss the theme: "Sustainable Development Strategies and

the New World Order.” One of the recommendations was the creation of a “Global Green Constitution” with a system of “rigid controls that some would equate to a police state.” (3)

- Now in Winnipeg for 20 years, the International Institute for Sustainable Development is located in the heart of the city. This institute is known worldwide for its research and promotion of global governance, especially as it relates to environmental policies. As one IISD publication tells us,

“The environment issue was set up as a global issue in need for global action. There were demands to strengthen international law, which could make nations toe the line... These efforts at the global level directly contributed to building a sense of global identity, or global citizenship which would be the first step towards global governance.” (4)

- Winnipeg is to be the northern in-land port for the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor, economically linking North America in a tri-national energy and transportation grid.

- The Museum of Human Rights is being built in downtown Winnipeg, and the architecture is designed to invoke a journey from “darkness to light” in a “changing world.” Over 47,000 square feet of space will tell stories of human rights abuses, and “nearly a kilometre of bridges” will lead visitors up a 20-story glass Tower of Hope. Besides the hundreds of millions of dollars in cost, the Museum of Human Rights is controversial in that it appears to lean toward being a propaganda piece for certain causes. (Author’s Note: A few years ago I participated in a UN Human Rights conference in which this museum project was discussed as an educational tool for global governance).

- There has been some talk of making the city a global hub for aboriginal issues, including bringing a UNESCO office to Winnipeg with an international aboriginal mandate.

And now Winnipeg can boast of hosting the 2010, G8 World Religions Summit – organized and steered by some of the top leaders in the World Federalist Movement!

The potential for the city of Winnipeg to act as a “quiet platform,” advancing important global agendas, is beyond doubt. In the months and years to come, watch as this prairie city morphs into a “New Geneva.” Mr. Christie was right; “This is a place where extraordinary things continue quietly to happen.”

Carl Teichrib is editor of *Forcing Change* (www.forcingchange.org).

1. See my report, “Bridging Politics and Religion for Global Unification,” *Forcing Change*, Volume 1, Issue 3.
2. See “Arthur Conan Doyle’s Adventures in Winnipeg,” *Manitoba History*, Number 25, Spring 1993.
3. WEEEC, *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*, 1990, p.15.
4. *Youth Sourcebook on Sustainable Development*, IISD, 1994, p.63.

Points to Ponder

Continued from page 2

...that a believer of another religion shouldn't be theologically challenged, as this leads to religious contention (Example: upholding Jesus Christ as the "I AM" and the "the way, the truth, and the life" would be an affront to Islam - this would be divisive in the work of bridge-building).

The interfaith goal is peace, not division; and if a certain truth leads to confrontation, then that truth must be marginalized or avoided within inter-religious dialogue. Likewise, interfaith partnering has to refrain from challenging the fundamental claims of Christianity (see the second sub-point below). By following its logical extension, interfaith bridge building inevitably produces a hazy type of *status quo* with two predictable results;

A) The Christian witness, that of evangelism and mission outreach for the sake of Jesus Christ's exclusive Gospel, must be watered down or shunned. Already this is showing itself through the upcoming ecumenical/interfaith *Code of Conduct on Conversion*, an agreement being drafted through the World Council of Churches and the Vatican – along with input from Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist leaders. This code, which is to be finalized in 2010, openly seeks to limit "proselytizing" and religious "conversions." As recommendation #3 points out, "all should heal themselves from the obsession of converting others."

B) Interfaith partnering runs the risk of inducing intellectual, historical and theological laziness as Christians no longer have to "contend for the faith." It's not unusual, therefore, to find that Christians engaged in interfaith bridge building talk about God's "revelation to us," and God's "revelation to them" (those who hold another faith, such as Islam or Hinduism).

But think about it: if God gave revelations through different faiths, then those revelations must be equally valid. Therefore, the scriptures from the different world's religions must be free from contradictions regarding the nature and identity of God, if indeed they are all revelations coming from and concerning the same deity. This means that the teachings of the Old and New Testaments, the Muslim *Qur'an*, the Hindu *Vedas*, and the *Book of Mormon* (among others), must align in their core beliefs.

Yet they don't. The *Qur'an*, the *Vedas*, the *Book of Mormon*, and the "enlightenment" of Buddhism all contradict the Old and New Testament's revelation of God's character and identity.

Just because another religion – such as Islam or Mormonism – uses the names "God" or "Jesus," doesn't mean it's the same deity worshipped by Christians. Indeed, the revelations of Islam demonstrate a different God than the one of the Bible; just as the teachings regarding Jesus in Mormonism portray a different "Jesus" than the one encountered in the New Testament.

To say that the names are the same, and therefore the deity is one and the same, is akin to saying that because there are nine identical names in a phone book these same names represents only one person.

Interfaith dialogue, by its nature, refrains from exploring the most crucial of questions: “Who is the real God?” and “Who is Jesus Christ?”

3) When Christian leaders interlock with other religions for “peace,” the potential to confuse young Christians is very real. Our liberal-minded universities and colleges already *strongly* pressure youth to reject Christian beliefs and Western principles. Christian leaders, therefore, have a responsibility to encourage and strengthen these men and women, not add to the spiritual confusion that already permeates society.

4) When Christian leadership seeks to partner with other religions, schisms occur within the church body as congregations, leaders and laypeople find themselves opposed to one another theologically. Moreover, pastors who stand firm against official interfaith collaboration can find themselves at odds with their denomination and/or association’s leadership. And if the pastor’s own church isn’t willing to back him in countering the official line, then it becomes exceedingly difficult to effectively minister to the home congregation, let alone contend with the pressures from denominational authorities.

On another front, animosity and/or apathy towards Christian leaders and churches may take root.

5) Finally, the cultural signals sent by Christian leaders who walk the interfaith road compound the confusion of ongoing spiritual/social change. Currently, a large percentage of Western adults and approximately 60% of American youth hold to some form of religious universalism. To these individuals, Jesus Christ is no more than a moral man or great reformer, alongside Krishna or Buddha. In their minds that’s all Jesus will ever be, because in the quest for peace, that’s all interfaithism can allow.

The above was an excerpt from Carl Teichrib’s article, *Menno Peace*, as extracted from an earlier edition of *Forcing Change* (www.forcingchange.org)

Lines of Influence: 2010, G8 World Religions Summit

IMPORTANT: This is an essential document, for it provides a roadmap of influence from those organizations who participated in the G8 World Religions Summit to more grassroots bodies – including local churches.

Those organizations at the table during the 2010, G8 World Religions Summit were encouraged and *expected* to be change agents within their particular “faith community.” Karen Hamilton, one of the key planners, explained to *Christian Week* the strategy of religious partnering. “They [participating organizations] reflect constituencies. They come by virtue of their position and that’s been a very deliberate strategy.” (*ChristianWeek*, “World religions summit in Winnipeg will deliver message to G8,” March 26, 2010).

The strategy is simple yet effective: It’s a top-down approach where participating faith groups were chosen because of their position of influence, thus being able to nudge their constituent members, affiliates, and partners into a globally accepted framework. Therefore, it’s important that we know who was at the table, and the constituencies they represent. NOTE: All organizations that participated at the G8 Religions table were supportive of the agenda, for when the final declaration was presented it was unanimously approved.

This document contains two lists, along with constituency sub-directories. The first is a List of Official Partners; these are organizations that publically supported the Summit and were officially on board throughout the process. The second list is comprised of organizations that were invited to and participated at the negotiating table. As no official list of participants was given to Observers, this second list was pieced together through first-hand witness and subsequent press releases. Therefore, some groups may have been overlooked.

Sub-directories are found under certain organizations, such as the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. These sub-directories represent the *lines of influence* that fall under particular faith organizations.

NOTE: This does not mean that all groups listed in the sub-directories support the interfaith agenda or the parent organization’s involvement in the G8 World Religions Summit. Some may be sympathetic, however, the majority of the groups in the sub-directories probably don’t even know about the event, let alone that a major partner or parent body was directly involved.

Do some homework and check to see if your church or denomination is represented! If so, monitor what your denomination is being asked to participate in, sign onto, or accept as behavioral changes. Is there a worldview change taking place, and what direction is it moving in? Moreover, if your church or group finds the interfaith/socialist approach unacceptable, then tact-

fully and firmly confront the parent body. Let them know that they are accountable to their member/affiliate constituents!

Sadly, without even knowing it, my own church network was represented at the Summit. Here's the line of influence as it impacts my congregation:

- The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) was a full partner and participant at the G8 Religious Summit.
- The Associated Gospel Churches (AGC) is an organization affiliated with the EFC, and my home church is a member of the AGC.
- Not only is my congregation part of the AGC network, but my church is also an individual affiliate of the EFC.
- Therefore, as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada starts to promote the goals and aspirations of the G8 Religions Summit, influence may be exerted through two lines:

1) From the EFC to the AGC to my church.

2) From the EFC directly to my congregation. (Probably through articles in the EFC magazine and suggested advocacy programs for individual churches.)

Sub-directories are listed in normal text and are found under such headings as *members*, *partners*, and *affiliates*. Whereas Official Partners and other groups at the negotiating table are found in bold on the left-hand side.

List of Official Partners & Affiliates

Anishinabe Nation

Baha'i Community of Canada

Canadian Centre for Diversity

Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

Canadian Council of Churches

Members: Anglican Church of Canada
 Archdiocese of Canada, Orthodox Church in America
 Armenian Holy Apostolic Church, Canadian Diocese
 Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec
 Canadian Baptists of Western Canada
 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
 Religious Society of Friends – Quakers
 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada
 Christian Reformed Church in North America – Canada
 Coptic Orthodox Church of Canada
 Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Canada
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto
Mennonite Church Canada
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America
The Salvation Army
Ukrainian Catholic Church
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
The United Church of Canada

Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues

Canadian Council of Imams

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Members: ADRA Canada (Adventist Development & Relief Agency)
Canadian Baptist Ministries
Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace
Canadian Lutheran World Relief
Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Emergency Relief & Development, Pentecostal Assemblies of Can.
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
Mennonite Central Committee
Nazarene Compassionate Ministries
Presbyterian World Service & Development
Primate's World Relief & Development Fund, Anglican Church
The Salvation Army
United Church of Canada
World Relief Canada

Canadian Jewish Congress

CFORE (Canadian Forum on Religion and Ecology, an offshoot of the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology)

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (with almost 1000 individual church affiliates across Canada; the EFC is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance)

Affiliate Denominations:

Anglican Network in Canada
Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada Inc.
Associated Gospel Churches
Baptist General Conference of Canada
Canadian Baptists of Ontario & Quebec
Canadian Baptists of Western Canada
Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church

Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
Canadian Fellowship of Churches & Ministers
Canadian National Baptist Convention
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Church of God in Canada (Anderson)
Church of God in Canada (Cleveland)
Church of the Nazarene Canada
Congregational Christian Churches in Canada
Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches
Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada
Evangelical Free Church of Canada
Evangelical Mennonite Conference
Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, Canada
Fellowship of Christian Assemblies of Canada
Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches
Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada
Independent Assemblies of God Int. (Canada)
Mennonite Church Canada
North American Baptist Conference – Canada
Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America
The Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada
The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada
The Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, Canada
The Free Methodist Church in Canada
The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
The Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland
The Salvation Army
The Wesleyan Church of Canada [Atlantic & Central Canada]
United Brethren Church in Canada
Vineyard Resource Canada
Vision Ministries Canada
Worldwide Church of God, Canada

Affiliate Ministries:

A Rocha Canada
African Enterprise (Canada)
Aglow International of Canada
Arab World Ministries
Arrow Leadership Ministries
Awana Clubs Canada
Back to the Bible Canada
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Canada

Bridgeway Foundation
Bus Stop Bible Studies
Canadian Association of Pregnancy Support Services
Canadian Bible Society
Canadian Council of Christian Charities
Canadian National Christian Foundation
Christar
Christian Business Ministries Canada
Christian Horizons
Christian Info Society
Christian Legal Fellowship
Christian Medical and Dental Society
Christian Service Brigade
Christian Studies International
Church Army in Canada
Compassion Canada
Crossroads Christian Communications Inc.
CrossWorld
Emmanuel International
Every Home for Christ International – Canada
Focus on the Family (Canada) Association
Frontiers Christian Ministries
Galcom International
Greater Europe Mission
Home School Legal Defence Association
I.N. Network Canada
Intercede International (formerly Christian Aid Mission)
International Teams Canada
International Christian Response
International Justice Mission Canada
Interserve Canada
Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada
In Touch Ministries of Canada
Jews for Jesus Canada
Medicine Hat Evangelical Association
Mission Aviation Fellowship of Canada
Missionfest Toronto
Mustard Seed Street Ministry
National Alliance of Covenanting Congregations
National Association of Marriage Enhancement Canada
National House of Prayer
Navigators of Canada
New Direction Ministries of Canada

OM Canada
OMF International, Canada
One Way Ministries
Open Doors with Brother Andrew
Open Bible Faith Fellowship of Canada
Ottawa Innercity Ministries
Outreach Canada
Partners International, Canada
Pioneers-Canada
Power to Change (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ, Canada)
Precept Ministries Canada
Renewal Fellowship Within the Presbyterian Church in Canada
reSource Leadership International Inc.
Samaritan's Purse, Canada
Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto
Scripture Union Canada
Siloam Mission Church of the Nazarene
SIM Canada
TEAM of Canada
The Bible League of Canada
The Rock on Campus
The Salvation Army Ethics Centre
The Scott Mission
The Voice of the Martyrs
Toronto Church Planting
Toronto City Mission
Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship
VisionLedd Ministries
WEC International Canada
Woman's Christian Temperance Union
Women Alive
World Relief Canada
World Vision Canada
Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada
Yonge Street Mission
Youth for Christ Canada

Affiliate Educational Institutes:

Alberta Bible College
Ambrose University College
Bethany Bible College (Sussex, N.B.)
Bethany College (Hepburn, Sask.)
Briercrest Family of Schools

Canadian Mennonite University
Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary
Christ for the Nations Bible College
Columbia Bible College
Crandall University
Eston College
Heritage College & Seminary
Horizon College & Seminary
Institut de théologie pour la francophonie
Institute for Christian Studies
Living Faith Bible College
Master's College & Seminary
McMaster Divinity College
Nipawin Bible Institute
Pacific Life Bible College
Peace River Bible Institute
Prairie Bible Institute
Providence College & Seminary
Redeemer University College
Regent College
Rocky Mountain College
St. Stephen's University
Steinbach Bible College
Summit Pacific College
Taylor University College & Seminary
The King's University College
Trinity Western University and ACTS Seminaries
Tyndale University College & Seminary
Vanguard College
William and Catherine Booth College (Salvation Army)

G8 Research Group

Hindu Federation – Canada

KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives)

Members: Anglican Church of Canada
 Christian Reformed Church of North America
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
 Presbyterian Church of Canada
 United Church of Canada
 Religious Society of Friends – Quakers
 Canadian Catholic Org for Development & Peace
 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Canadian Religious Conference
Mennonite Central Committee of Canada
The Primate's World Relief & Development Fund

Konko Church of Izuo
Manitoba Inter-Faith Council
Micah Challenge

Members: Canadian Christian Relief and Development Association
Canadian Council of Churches
Canadian Foodgrains Bank
Canadian Youth Network
The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
ADRA Canada
African Enterprise Canada
Canadian Baptist Ministries
Canadian Food for the Hungry International
Cause Canada
Christian Blind Mission
Christian Children's Fund of Canada
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Crossroads Christian Communications
Diaconal Ministries Canada
Emmanuel International
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
Foundation for International Development Assistance
Habitat for Humanity Canada
International Teams of Canada
The Leprosy Mission
Mennonite Central Committee
Opportunity International Canada
The Salvation Army
SIM Canada
Visionledd
WEC International
World Vision Canada
Wycliffe Canada
YWAM Canada

MOSAIC Institute

National Council of Churches USA

Members (more than 100,000 congregations and 45 million people):

African Methodist Episcopal Church
The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches in the USA
Apostolic Catholic Church
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Brethren
The Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends United Meeting
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
International Council of Community Churches
Korean Presbyterian Church in America
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Mar Thoma Church
Moravian Church in America, Northern & Southern Province
National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
Orthodox Church in America
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Polish National Catholic Church of America
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America
Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. and Canada
The Swedenborgian Church
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America
United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church

Project Ploughshares (an ecumenical arm of the Canadian Council of Churches)

Sikh Community – Canada

Sojourners**Tony Blair Faiths Act Fellows/Tony Blair Faith Foundation**

Note: The Religious Advisory Council for the Tony Blair Faith Foundation is made up of the following,

- **Anantanand Rambachan**, Chair of the Religion Department at St. Olaf College, Minnesota.
- The Rev. **David Coffey**, President of the Baptist World Alliance.
- Rabbi **David Rosen**, Chair of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations.
- Dr. **Ismail Khudr AL-Shatti**, Advisor in Diwan of HH the Prime Minister of Kuwait.
- **Jagtar Singh Grewal**, former Chair of the India Institute of Advanced Study and former Vice-Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University.
- **Roshi Joan Halifax**, Abbot of the Upaya Zen Center.
- The Reverend **Joel Edwards**, Director of Micah Challenge International and former General Director of the Evangelical Alliance.
- Chief Rabbi Sir **Jonathan Sacks**, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth.
- Right Reverend **Josiah Idowu-Fearon**, Bishop of Kaduna.
- Rev. Dr. **Rick Warren**, Founding and Senior Pastor of Saddleback Church and Founder of the P.E.A.C.E Coalition.
- Rev. and Right Honourable **Richard Chartres**, Lord Bishop of London.

University of Toronto MultiFaith Centre

University of Winnipeg, Faculty of Theology

World Association for Christian Communication

World Council on Religions for Peace (with worldwide affiliate bodies)

Other Bodies Present at the G8 Table & Affiliates

All African Conference of Churches (representing over 120 million people in 39 African countries, including 23 national Councils and 4 Sub-regional Fellowships)

Global Partners:

National Council of Churches in Australia
 Australian Council for International Development
 The Anglican Church of Canada
 The United Church of Canada
 Inter-Church Action
 Inter-Church Coalition on Africa
 Interchurch Fund for International Development

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
Canadian Council of Churches
Dan Church Aid, Denmark
FinnChurchAid, Finland
CEVAA
Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland
Brot Fur Die Welt
Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Christian World Service, New Zealand
Norwegian Church Aid
Church of Sweden
Church of Sweden Mission
Diakonia
World Council of Churches
Swiss Inter Church Aid
Lutheran World Federation
Bread for all
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches – FSPC
DM-échange et mission
Fellowship of the Least Coin, Thailand
Christian Aid, United Kingdom
The Methodist Church, United Kingdom
The Church of Scotland
World Association for Christian Communication
Feed the Minds, England
SPCK Worldwide (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)
Disciples of Christ
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Church of the Brethren
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
United Methodist Church
Trinity Church
Mennonite Central Committee
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Agricultural Missions, Inc
Church World Service
The Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Lott Carey International (LCI)

The Riverside Church
Bread for the World
Africa Action
Washington Office on Africa
Development Finance International, Inc.
Reformed Church in America

Armenian Orthodox Church, Canada

Canadian Baptist Ministries (with field staff around the world)

Partners: Canadian Baptists of Western Canada
Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec
l'Union d'Eglises Baptistes Francaises au Canada
Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches
Atlantic Baptist Women
Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec
Women in Focus, Western Canada
Christianity Research Centre, Sichuan University, China
Evangelical Community Church, Hong Kong
Angola Evangelical Church
African Christian Church & Schools, Kenya
Africa Brotherhood Church (with over 1 million members)
Association of Baptist Churches of Rwanda
European Baptist Federation, Czech Republic
Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, Lebanon
Bolivian Baptist Union, Bolivia
Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel, El Salvador
Baptist World Alliance (almost 160,000 churches representing
more than 36 million members worldwide)

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (Officially recognized by the Holy See in 1948, and is a member of the worldwide network of Episcopal Conferences)

Church of England (over 13 million members)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (almost 5 million members)

International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations

International Society of Shinto

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Mennonite Church Canada (besides church members, MC Canada also connects with the following bodies)

Member/partner groups:
Canadian Council of Churches
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Mennonite World Conference
 Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
 Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service
 Canadian Mennonite University
 Christian Peacemaker Teams
 Mennonite Central Committee
 Mennonite Creation Care Network
 Mennonite Disaster Service
 Mennonite Foundation of Canada
 Mennonite Men/Join Hands
 Mennonite Volunteer Service Adventure
 Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools
 International partners in ministry
 Mennonite Camping Association
 Mennonite Church USA
 Mennonite Mission Network
 Mennonite Women Canada
 North American Young Adult Fellowship

Millennium Promise

Pacific Conference of Churches

Members: Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and Solomon Islands
 Church of Melanesia
 Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
 Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
 Conference Episcopale Catholique De Pacifique
 Eglise Evangelique en Polynesie Francaise
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea
 Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga
 Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma
 Methodist Church in Samoa
 Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
 United Church in Papua New Guinea
 Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand
 Anglican Diocese of Polynesia
 Catholic Church in the Solomon Islands
 Cook Islands Christian Church
 Evangelical Church in New Caledonia & the Loyalty Is
 Kiribati Protestant Church
 United Church in the Solomon Islands
 Church of Christ in Vanuatu
 Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu

Ekalesia Niue
Nauru Congregational Church
United Church of Christ in the Marshall Islands
United Church of Christ in Pohnpei
Nukuno Protestant Churches Association
Fiji Council of Churches
National Council of Churches in American Samoa
Papua New Guinea Council of Churches
Samoa Council of Churches
Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA)
Tonga National Council of Churches
Kiribati National Council of Churches
Niue Council of Churches

Russian Orthodox Church

Salvation Army

Saudi Arabian Ministry of Islamic Affairs

United Church Canada (largest Protestant denomination in Canada)

Partners:

- Canadian Centre for Ecumenism
- Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries
- Canadian Foodgrains Bank
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Canadian Health Coalition
- Canadian Council of Churches
- Canadian Youth Climate Coalition
- Climate Action Network
- Canadian Interchurch Stewardship Committee
- Church Council on Justice and Corrections
- Church Council on Theological Education in Canada
- Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
- Ecumenical Stewardship Centre
- Ecumenical Water Network
- Project Ploughshares
- North-South Institute
- Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada
- Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation
- National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee
- North American Interfaith Network
- Parliament of the World's Religions
- World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- World Association for Christian Communication
- World Methodist Council

World Student Christian Federation

World Conference of Religions for Peace

World Council of Churches

* NOTE: The United Church of Canada also partners with many other organizations around the world.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC was represented through a statement of support delivered to the G8 World Religions Summit. The WARC represents more than 75 million Christians in approximately 100 countries.)

World Evangelical Alliance

Members include 7 regional organizations plus 128 national bodies. Other members include; The Fellowship of the Evangelicals in Egypt, Council of Local Evangelical Churches in the Holy Land, and The Christian Council of Korea.

Partners:

- Advocates International
- Christian Media Corporation
- Dawn Ministries
- Disciple Nations Alliance
- Integral Alliance
- International Council for Evangelical Theological Education
- Micah Network
- Olivet University
- Trainers of Pastors International Coalition
- Viva Network
- World Evangelical Theological Institute Association
- World Vision International
- Wycliffe Bible Translators International

Associates:

- Apostolos Campus Ministry International
- Action International Ministries
- Africa Inland Mission International
- Alliance for Saturation Church Planting
- Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel International
- Arab World Evangelical Ministers Association
- Asia Missions Association
- Asia Theological Association
- Asociación Evangélica de Educación Teológica en América Latina
- Association of Christians Ministering Among Internationals
- Barnabas International
- Bethany International
- Billy Graham Center
- Brethren in Christ World Missions

Caleb Project
Campus Crusade for Christ International
CB International
Cedar Fund
Christian Communications International Ltd.
Christopher Sun Evangelistic Association
Church Mission Society
Church of God World Missions
Compassion
Cooperation of Mission from Latin America
Evangelical Alliance Mission
Evangelical Free Church Mission
Evangelical Mennonite Church International Ministries
Evangeliska Frikyrkan
Every Home for Christ International
Faith and Family Foundation
Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission
Food for the Hungry, Inc.
General Baptist Foreign Mission Society
Global AIDS Prayer Partnership
Global Mapping International
Global March for Jesus
Good News Productions International
Greater Europe Mission
Harbour International Ministries
Healthcare Christian Fellowship International
Himalayan Center for World Mission, Inc.
Holy Bible Society
International Aid, Inc.
International Association of Evangelical Chaplains
International Bible Society
International Friendship Evangelism, Inc.
International Institute for Christian Studies
Inter-National Needs Network
International Students, Inc.
International Teams
International Teams of Canada
Jews for Jesus
Latin America Mission
Life Ministries
Lifewind International
Literacy & Evangelism International
Luis Palau Evangelistic Association

Medical Ambassadors International
Middle East Media
Mission Aviation Fellowship
Mission Covenant Church of Norway
Mission to Unreached Peoples
Mission Training International
The Navigators
National Council of Evangelical Pastors of Nicaragua
Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband (Norwegian Lutheran Mission)
NORMISJON (formerly Norwegian Santal Mission)
Nurses Christian Fellowship International
OC International
Olivet Center for World Mission
OMS International
Open Doors International
Operation Mobilisation
Orebro Mission
Overseas Council International
Overseas Radio and Television, Inc.
Partners International
Pioneers International
Project Partner with Christ
Ravi Zacharias International Ministries
Saint Luke Society
Scripture Union International Council
SEND International
SIM Serving in Mission
South America Mission, Inc.
The Evangelical Alliance Mission
The Sentinel Group
Trainers of Pastors International Coalition
United States Center for World Mission
United World Mission
Veritas College International
Vietnam Ministries
VisionSynergy
The Voice of the Martyrs (Canada)
World Concern
World Mission
World Mission Prayer League
World Team, Inc.
World Thrust International
World Venture

World Witness
 Young Disciples of Jesus
 Youth for Christ International

Networks: Baptist General Conference
 The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada
 Evangelical Assembly of Presbyterian Churches
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church
 Fellowship of Evangelical Churches
 Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
 Presbyterian Church in America
 The Salvation Army
 The Wesleyan Church

World Vision

Zimbabwe Council of Churches (with 27 member church groups; the ZCC is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, a program of the World Council of Churches)

Forcing Change

FC is a monthly, online publication dedicated to documenting and analyzing the socio-religious transformations now sweeping our Western world.

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World 2 Interfaith
Religions 0 Leaders in the
Summit 1 G8 Nations



Sommet 2 Réunions des
des religions 0 dirigeants interreligieux
du monde 1 dans les pays du G8

A Time for Inspired Leadership and Action Final Draft - June 23, 2010

We, 80 senior leaders of the world's religions and faith-based organizations together with 13 youth delegates, from more than 20 countries representing Aboriginal, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Shinto, and Sikh religious traditions, have convened in Winnipeg, Manitoba on the eve of Canada hosting expanded global summits.

This September, we approach the two-thirds point for the deadline to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals—eight goals that, if achieved, would bring hope to millions and be a major step toward a more sustainable global future.

In the spirit of continuity and persistence, we carry forward important work begun in annual gatherings of religious leaders during earlier G8 summits.

Acknowledging our common humanity and embracing the imperative to treat all persons with dignity, we affirm that no one person is more or less valuable than another. We urge the political leaders to consider first the vulnerable among us, particularly our children, and to work together to address the dehumanizing scourge of poverty and injustice, and practice and promote care for our common environment, the Earth.

In our diverse faith traditions we have rich histories and powerful dreams for ending poverty, caring for the Earth and being peace-builders. We acknowledge our own shortcomings and inadequacies, we commit to continuing these life-giving actions in the service of the common good. While recognizing efforts already made to address many of these challenges, we expect government representatives to set aside short-term agendas and work together for a future that allows all people on this planet to thrive.

Military power and economic dominance are the basis for inclusion in a G8 and G20 global leaders' summit. The voices of the other 172 members of the United Nations are absent. In our faith traditions, we strive to listen to the weak and the vulnerable. Their voices must be included in decisions that affect them and all of us. At the summits in 2010, we expect leaders to put first the well-being of the majority of the world's population, of future generations and of the Earth itself. From our shared values we call on leaders to take courageous and concrete actions:

- to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable while simultaneously making structural changes to close the unacceptable growing gap between rich and poor;
- to prioritize long-term environmental sustainability and halt the harmful acceleration of climate change caused by us, while addressing its impacts on the poor; and

- to work for peace and remove factors that feed cycles of violent conflict and costly militarism.

Address Poverty

Almost half the people on this planet live in poverty and insecurity in terms of the fundamental requirements for life with dignity. The most affected are women and children, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities. A record one billion people are now chronically hungry—one in seven does not have the food needed for basic life. All this is happening in the context of a growing gap between the rich and poor, worsened by current undemocratic economic and governance systems.

The magnitude of poverty would be overwhelming were it not for the knowledge that this global inequity can be transformed into a shared life of human flourishing for all. Together, we have the capacity and the global resources to end extreme poverty and its impacts. In the past 18 years, a combination of health interventions and decreasing poverty levels resulted in a 28% reduction in global under-five mortality rates—from 90 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 65 deaths per 1,000 in 2008. Change is possible.

A common tenet in faith traditions is that we should treat others as we would have them treat us. This “golden rule” is a basic human principle that cuts across cultures and faith traditions, and calls us to a collective standard of mutual care.

Poverty is frequently the result of food, energy and economic crises originating in wealthier sectors of society. It is also the consequence of the culture of greed, corruption, conflict, and over-consumption. Poverty is local and international. The suffering of anyone is of concern to us all.

In 2010, we expect inspired leadership and actions to address poverty!

- Wealthy countries must do their share: take all necessary steps to achieve the Millennium Development Goals; invest 0.7 % of Gross National Income in development assistance in a transparent and accountable manner; cancel debts of poor countries without regressive conditions; halt capital flight from poor countries to wealthy countries; hinder the free flow of speculative money, maintain business and labor ethics, foster conditions for the development of small business, ensure workers earn living wages and receive decent treatment; and make poverty reduction a priority in trade and international financial negotiations.
- All countries must do their part: educate girl children to high school level as one of the most effective development interventions; practice good governance; combat corruption, and put in place poverty reduction policies that ensure everyone has access to basic rights such as nutritious food, safe water, health care, education and economic opportunity.

Care for the Earth

All our faith traditions call us to careful stewardship of the Earth. Climate change has become an urgent manifestation of our collective abuse of the very environment that sus-

tains the fullness of life. We see the consequences in melting ice-caps and rising sea levels, lost habitats for threatened animal and plant species, and erratic weather that threaten the lives of millions.

As scientists discover new accelerators of climate and ocean change and note the compression of time available to avoid irreparable damage, it is clear that bold action is needed now. We must move beyond short-term political interests and arguments over who pays. In our indivisible planet we all pay – and future generations will pay dearly – if we continue to delay decisive action now.

The Earth, our home, is a gift from the Creator. Our faith traditions call us to relationships of mutual care and nurture between people and ecosystems. Faith communities see the environment through a lens of life on the planet as a unified whole, not unlike the cells of a body, infinitely differentiated in form and function yet deeply interdependent. In this framework, industrialized countries have caused a disproportionate amount of environmental damage. The strategy of promoting endless development and high consumption lifestyles must be challenged.

The roots of this crisis are spiritual and moral. Consequently, we need a renewed eco-ethic that restores right relations between North and South by generating new economic paradigms and policies that are compatible with the Earth's regenerative abilities and by promoting just distribution of resources. The need for a new generation of rights related to ecology is becoming apparent. As faith communities, we must move to action-oriented results, networking, and building morally sustainable communities.

In 2010, we expect inspired leadership and actions that care for the Earth!

- Wealthier countries must come to a more profound understanding of the interdependence of life and take courageous steps needed to care for the planet. In the realm of climate change, concrete plans must be implemented to ensure global average temperatures do not exceed a 2° Centigrade increase from pre-industrial levels.
- In developing countries, the challenge is complex since growth, poverty reduction and environmental stewardship must journey together. This requires innovative leadership in these countries along with increased collaboration between rich and poor countries to protect agricultural lands from tourism and industrial developments, and support climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Invest in Peace

The well-being and shared security of all can only be realized when grounded in justice. Shared security focuses on the fundamental inter-relatedness of all persons and the environment (World Religions Summit, Sapporo 2008). Civilians in the world's poorest countries are the primary victims of war, insurgencies, criminal activities and other forms of armed violence. At the same time, we are collectively affected and implicated in global turmoil through our common humanity and through the priorities we set.

One clear example of misplaced priorities is global military spending, estimated to be US\$1,464 billion for 2008, while support for United Nations peace-keeping operations is only US\$9 billion. NATO countries account for over 2/3 of this global military spending; these payments for military services are more than 20 times the annual world financial contributions to Official Development Assistance. Another example of misplaced priorities is the continuing threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that represent a moral affront to human dignity and a grave danger to life.

We are aware that there are those who use religion to justify violent acts against others, and thereby offend the true spirit of their faith and the long-standing values of their faith communities. We condemn religiously motivated terrorism and extremism and commit to stop the teaching and justification of the use of violence between and among our faith communities. Our faith traditions are steeped in the promotion of love for one another and deep respect for all humankind; peace and justice walk hand in hand. Our most inspiring teachings are stories of reconciliation and compassion. We will collaborate to create paths of peaceful and sustainable coexistence.

In 2010, we expect inspired leadership and actions that invest in peace!

- We call on governments to halt the arms race, make new and greater investments in supporting a culture of peace, strengthen the rule of law, stop ethnic cleansing and the suppression of minorities, build peace through negotiation, mediation, and humanitarian support to peace processes, including the control and reduction of small arms that every year are the cause of over 300,000 deaths globally.
- We call on states with nuclear weapons to make immediate and substantial cuts in the number of nuclear weapons and to cease the practice of having nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert. Let these be the initial steps in a defined process leading to the complete and permanent elimination of nuclear weapons.
- We call for the establishment of transparent and effective dialogue mechanisms between international organizations and faith communities that takes advantage of the peace-making potential of religion.

Our Commitment

We recognize that we share responsibility to be and act for the change we want to see. We reaffirm our own commitment to call on our communities and members to:

- demonstrate solidarity with the poor and vulnerable in our society and the globe;
- monitor the compliance of our governments in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and, whenever possible, hold them publicly accountable for such compliance;
- confront consumerism, reduce consumption and change our lifestyle to give testimony to better stewardship and live more lightly on the Earth;
- cultivate the positive peacebuilding influence of religion and invest in building the capacity of our communities to participate in peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities;
- promote co-existence among different religious and ethnic communities while welcoming immigrants and refugees; and

- grow the collaboration of faith traditions to provide leadership, research and action, work to engage our own communities on the issues, and maintain continuous consultation and evaluation of these global political summits in the coming years while building political support for the changes we seek.

Our Deep Desire for 2010

As people of faith and as concerned global inhabitants, we urge our communities to do our part to end poverty, care for the Earth and invest in peace, including building a movement of political participation that makes seemingly impossible change possible. In a spirit of positive collaboration, acknowledging that both political leaders and faith leaders carry tremendous responsibility for setting the parameters for our common life, we will monitor the decisions our government leaders take, including decisions made at the 2010 political leaders' summits in Canada. We expect follow-through on past promises. We expect bold new actions based on the values and recommendations outlined here. If we fail in these goals, we fail our children who look to us to secure a viable future for them. Our prayers and wishes for wisdom and compassion are with our political leaders at this critical moment.