

Dear Friends—

Welcome to the United Religions Initiative (URI) Year in Review 2006.

For more than ten years, URI has been at work around the world confronting what may be the defining issue of our age: religious conflict.

From the dawn of human history right through the publication of this morning's New York Times, religion has helped fuel wars, pogroms and genocide. Today faith factors into most major conflicts, from Darfur to Iraq, to say nothing of the countless skirmishes and scuffles that rarely make the network news.

Against this backdrop, we are sometimes asked, What can URI possibly do? Particularly given our reliance on people who rarely receive invitations to Security Council or Group of Eight meetings—people like Argentine craftsmen, German office workers and Indian college students?

The answer is: a lot. More, in fact, than we had the courage to hope for, until last year. In 2006, we witnessed as never before the stunning power of the grassroots to sway the treetops.

As you read this Year in Review, you will discover that

- In the Philippines, homemakers, community organizers, temple workers and others, cooperating under the banner of URI, have helped restore peace to city streets and transform their government's handling of interfaith relations.
- In Brazil, similarly ordinary people of different faiths, united through URI, have helped tighten gun laws in the nation with the world's highest rate of firearm deaths.
- In Jordan, URI volunteers in their 20's, Christians, Muslims and Druze, have built a national and even international reputation for helping Palestinian refugees confront war trauma and re-imagine their relationships with people of other faiths.

This is just the beginning. In a world of nearly six billion people, we have just 340 Cooperation Circles engaging one million people a year. We look forward to the day when URI CCs are trusted tools of interfaith peacemaking and community change in every city and town in the world. When religiously-motivated conflict has ceased to be a global scourge. When Sunni and Shia live together in peace in Iraq, Christian and Muslim in Sudan, Hindu and Buddhist in Sri Lanka.

That day will come. We look forward to sharing it with you.

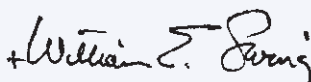
With care and gratitude,



The Rev. Canon Charles P. Gibbs
Executive Director



Yolanda Trevino
Global Council Chair



The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing
Global Council President



In Ethiopia, against a backdrop of growing tensions and polarities, young Ethiopian adults have formed a URI CC and are working strategically to build trust among youth of different faiths.

In the Indian province of Kerala, long-smoldering hostility between Orthodox and Jacobite Christians recently burst into flame. Now a multi-faith team of URI volunteers in Kerala has stepped in to help resolve once and for all the ancient rivalry.

Until recently, it wasn't unusual to hear gunshots echoing through an impoverished Manila neighborhood in Caloocon City. Today, however, the streets are peaceful, thanks largely to years of daily Muslim/Christian dialogue coupled with inner peace work by the URI Peacemakers Circle CC.

In the 21-year war between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army, Muslim, Anglican and Catholic members of the Acholi Religious Leaders CC say their last prayers as they head into the jungle to engage these rebel leaders in person. They have made great progress toward resolution, and have rescued thousands of LRA child conscripts.

Through URI's Moral Imagination Peacebuilding Program, CC leaders from these four conflict zones gather periodically with URI global staff and scholar/mediator John Paul Lederach. The workshops allow peacemakers to escape briefly from turmoil, deepen their own spirituality, develop new strategies, encourage one another and renew their courage, creativity and commitment for the hard work of making peace between people of different faiths. Through this pilot program we are creating a new peacebuilding capacity for the entire URI network.

United Religions Initiative

2006 Year in Review

Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, Justice and Healing

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URI is a vital community of people around the world who give their time, their hard work and their resources to create a more peaceful, just and healthy world. Volunteers contributed hundreds of thousands of hours to URI in 2006, and we are deeply grateful. We also acknowledge those who made financial gifts to URI through the Global Support Office in San Francisco in 2006. For your generosity and commitment, we thank you all.

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"INTER-RELIGIOUS POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE WILL NOT BE SOLVED BY MILITARY WEAPONS OR POLICE ACTION... THE COMMUNITY ABSOLUTELY MUST ARRIVE AT A PLACE OF HEALTHY DIALOGUE AND COMMON CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION, EVERYWHERE."

-- BISHOP WILLIAM E. SWING, URI PRESIDENT, SPEAKING BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON INTERFAITH COOPERATION, SEPT. 21, 2006

Year in Review 2006

"I will never forget the songs chanted by the delegates," said Dr. Taleb Al-Harithi, "voices...full of faith and determination to continue URI goals."

In December, Dr. Taleb, a Palestinian URI volunteer leader, represented the URI global network at a URI regional assembly in India. The experience inspired Dr. Taleb, whose life in the Palestinian territories could foster more despair than determination. It also enriched his Indian colleagues.

Regional assemblies help URI leaders deepen relationships, share knowledge, and advance projects from the local to the national or multi-national scale. Like URI's global communications system, assemblies help transform isolated grassroots interfaith groups into a coordinated global movement.

2006 brought URI many unprecedented opportunities to unite diverse people for peace, justice and healing.

In June URI hosted a retreat in Cyprus, gathering 25 young adults of different faiths from Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Lithuania, the Palestinian territories, Tunisia and the U.K. They explored how youth can unite across faiths and nationalities to promote peace and healing for the earth and all life.

In December we launched our Moral Imagination peacebuilding program, bringing together CC leadership teams from conflict zones in Ethiopia, India, the Philippines and Uganda. In five workshops over two years, they will deepen their peacebuilding skills with coaching from scholar/mediator John Paul Lederach, returning home between workshops to apply their learning.

Also last year, URI's Global Council endorsed and many CCs joined the U.N. program inspired by Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai, to plant a billion trees across the planet. With support from the Turner Family Foundation, URI undertook an intensive study of how CCs might work together around the world to help stop global warming.

Along with this increased attention to global networking, URI remained strong locally in 2006, forming 28 new CCs, including

- Bangalore South CC, India
- Centre of Melbourne Interfaith and Others Network CC, Australia
- Escola Ntwananu Matola-Rio CC, Mozambique
- Seeds of Peace CC, Pakistan
- Unitheum CC, Germany
- Women's Interfaith Network (WIN-URI) CC, Multiregional
- Youth Actions in Development CC, Malawi

As URI grows, so do our capital needs. That's one reason we are pleased in 2006 to welcome URI founder and president, retired Episcopal Bishop of California William Swing to his new role on staff. Since September, Bishop Swing has been raising major gifts while laying the groundwork for an endowment campaign to secure the future of our global network of interfaith peacemakers.



Africa: Interfaith Famine Relief Project May Inspire New Approach to Continent's Problems

A meager 2005 harvest left more than half of Malawians hungry by February 2006, reported Joyce Ngoma, a URI leader in this southern African nation. With whole families surviving for days at a time on only sugar water, Joyce and her fellow URI volunteers took action. Partnering with St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, Muslim, Christian and animist URI volunteers gathered maize, beans, and cooking oil, quickly distributing more than two tons of food. Among those saved were a 75-year-old grandmother and 15 orphans in her care. Their compassionate action inspired Mussie Hailu, an Ethiopian on URI's global council and a diplomat with the African Union, to encourage the creation of an African Union bureau for interfaith action.



Asia: Former Enemies in Pakistan Gather to Observe Religious Holiday Together

Interfaith conflict, especially among Muslims and Christians, has been a huge problem in Pakistan: houses of worship have been burned, clergy assaulted. So when the governor of Punjab Province convinced Baha'is, Hindus and Muslims to join Christians in breaking their Lenten fast last year, it was a turning point for ordinary Pakistanis and their national leaders. The governor also gave money to needy Christians and Muslims, sending a strong message that the two groups are valued equally by their country's leadership. Yuel Bhatti, a URI volunteer in Pakistan, attributes the changing attitude of public officials and the supportive response of ordinary people to years of work by URI CCs in Pakistan.



Europe: Building Bridges

UNESCOAT Cooperation Circle addresses interfaith conflict in Catalonia in Spain. From influencing religious curricula in schools to serving as a bridge between faith groups and city government, their work helps religious groups view each other not as a source of conflict but as a resource for peace. Most recently, Elisabeth Lheure, a Bahai from Iran, mediates between supporters and opponents of a new mosque in Bardalona, a small town outside of Barcelona. "Efforts are blossoming in small ways," says Elisabeth. "Gypsies and Muslims in Bardalona recently cooperated in celebrating their different feasts together." By celebrating their feasts together they are beginning to see each other as friend rather than enemy.



Latin America: Government's Commitment to Peace

Brazil has the world's highest death rate from firearms: on average, guns kill 100 Brazilians everyday. But thanks to the URI Brasilia CC's partnership with religious leaders and other NGOs, the Brazilian government is taking urgent action to stem the tide. On Nov. 23, 2006, Brazil established the Federal Parliamentary Culture of Peace Council. A week later the Parliamentary Hearing Commission acted to significantly reduce easy availability of handguns. Because of the Brasilia CC's ability to rally grassroots support for interfaith work and its partnership with NGO's, national government is acting and lives are being saved.



Middle East and North Africa: CCs Become a Resource for Teaching Peace

Muslim and Christian young adults of Jordan Interfaith Action (JIA) CC organized a Sport for Peace day last year for Palestinian refugee students. One game involved students passing a ball while calling out each other's names. Afterward they were asked whether the religion of the person passing or receiving the ball mattered, to help them recognize that it does not. Later the JIA volunteers were honored by the German Embassy for their creative approach to teaching peace. Meanwhile, the young leaders of Jordan's Quested Peace CC were conducting workshops to help Palestinian refugees overcome war trauma, and the Iris Women CC of Jordan accepted an invitation from the Women's Global Initiative to produce a manual on Bridging the Gap between U.S. and Muslim-Majority Regions.

MORE THAN 300 GRASSROOTS INTERFAITH COOPERATION CIRCLES



A Cooperation Circle is a group of at least seven people from three or more spiritual paths who agree to work together toward goals inspired by the URI Charter.

Working for Peace, Justice and Healing across the World



Multi-Region: Palestinian, American and Israelis Work Together to Reach the Top of the World

Ali Bushnaq, a Palestinian living in the United Arab Emirates, is a world-class mountaineer. Micha Yaniv and Dudu Yifrah are elite mountain climbers from Israel. By law, neither Micha nor Dudu may travel to Ali's home country. But in May 2006 they journeyed together to the top of the world. As members of the Everest Peace Project CC, they put their lives in each other's hands and became the first interfaith team to summit the world's tallest mountain. As CC leader Lance Trumbull observed, "We all share a common core. We all want to love and be loved. We are not so different after all." A documentary is in process to share with a conflict weary world the inspiring story of these supposed enemies joining together to meet extraordinary challenges.



North America: Dynamic Educational Courses to Promote Change

Across the U.S., URI is becoming a valuable resource for peacebuilding education, especially for ordinary people seeking practical ways to create cultures of peace, justice and healing in their communities. In North Carolina, the Henderson County CC hosted a course on Nonviolent Communication, a tool created by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., to help people communicate in a way that promotes love, a value held by all religions. In New York, Elijah McLean and the Abraham Reunion CC organized a six-day workshop, Peacebuilding as an Art and Practice. Participants enthusiastically embraced techniques to integrate the arts into their interfaith work and discovered ways to interpret holy texts to promote peace rather than conflict.



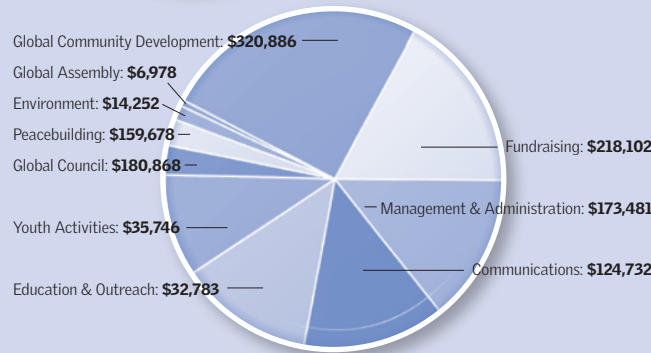
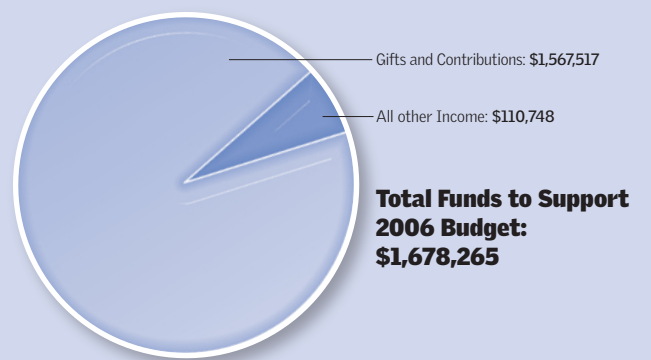
South East Asia and the Pacific: Muslim and Christian Relations Improve

Some years ago sporadic violence erupted in Metro Manila as Muslims fleeing the violence in Mindanao state mixed with the 98% Catholic majority. In response, Marites Africa, coordinator of the Peacemaker CC in the Philippines, contacted faith leaders in her community. They went to work to build relationships among Muslims and Christians, to end the violence and to build a positive future for all. Bullets have been replaced by free medical clinics, mutual goodwill and interfaith cooperation. Because of this and other innovative grassroots work, the Peacemaker's Circle was asked to help draft an interfaith action plan for peace and community transformation. The President of the Philippines was among the government officials that enthusiastically approved this plan.

Funds Received/Funds Spent 2006

Figures rounded to nearest thousand

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.



Total Funds Spent in 2006: \$1,267,506

In addition to these funds for the global URI, our Member Circles raise hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to support their local efforts.

URI CC List by Region (as of March 2007)

AFRICA	69
Angola	1
Benin	1
Ethiopia	1
Gabon	1
Gambia	1
Kenya	4
Liberia	1
Malawi	17
Mozambique	15
Nigeria	4
Senegal	2
Sierra Leone	1
South Africa	1
Swaziland	3
Uganda	14
Zambia	1
Zimbabwe	1
ASIA	112
Bangladesh	3
China	1
India	68
Korea	12
Nepal	1
Pakistan	24
Sri Lanka	2
Taiwan	1
EUROPE	24
Belgium	3
Bosnia	1
Denmark	2
Finland	3
Germany	4
The Netherlands	2
Romania	1
Russia	1
Spain	1
Tajikistan	1
Turkey	1
United Kingdom	4
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	21
Argentina	6
Bolivia	1
Brazil	6
Chile	1
Haiti	1
Mexico	1
Panama	2
Peru	2
Venezuela	1
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	25
Egypt	2
Iran	1
Israel	11
Jordan	6
Palestinian Authority	4
Tunisia	1
MULTIREGIONAL	24
NORTH AMERICA	47
Canada	2
USA	45
SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	15
Australia	2
Cambodia	1
Indonesia	2
Malaysia	1
New Zealand	1
Philippines	5
Singapore	1
Vietnam	2
TOTAL	337

The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

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