



WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

March 1–3, 2010

An Inter-Religious Call and Commitment to Action

Preamble

Inspired by shared beliefs and in a spirit of reconciliation, an international group of Christian and Muslim religious leaders gathered at Washington National Cathedral, March 1–3, 2010, to commit themselves to appeal to government and community leaders to promote peace and reconciliation efforts worldwide. They do so in a world threatened by the global economic crisis and inequitable distribution of resources, by humanitarian crises caused by natural disasters, food, water, and energy shortages, and climate change. New and enduring political and religious conflicts are increasing violence at every level. In particular, they recalled that the unresolved conflict in the Holy Land is the cause of permanent instability and dramatic violence imposed on persons and peoples of an entire region of the world. The worship of God who demands serious moral purpose is at the very core of Christianity and Islam; therefore, religious leaders must cooperatively work with each other and the political leaders in their respective countries in response to these crises.

The Principal Leaders of the Summit are four distinguished religious leaders of Sunni and Shi'a Islam and Anglican/Episcopal and Roman Catholic faith traditions, with the presence of Jewish Observers who bring a deep commitment and long-standing experience in interfaith initiatives seeking to build understanding, peace, and reconciliation among all peoples of faith, governments, and civil society. Each of the Principals invited other experts from their respective traditions to join them in this interfaith reflection and dialogue. Our respective Sacred Books were acknowledged as the foundation of these deliberations.

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself:
I am the Lord. Leviticus 19:18

[Jesus] said ..., "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22:37–40

O mankind, we have created you from male and female and made you into peoples and tribes in order that you may come to know one another. Surah 49:13

The Summit participants expressed a firm conviction that believers must become active agents of concrete change, making the world a better place for all. Thus they developed the following Plan of Action and have offered their personal commitment to promote it.

Principles for this Plan of Action

1. We believe in one God, the Creator of the Universe and Author of life.
2. Human life is sacred, and all persons are created with equal dignity and rights.
3. All believers have a right freely to claim their unique religious identity and convictions and to expect that their texts, practices, symbols, and places considered sacred be respected. To dismiss or demean another faith tradition, to impose a system of belief on others, or to proselytize them to change their beliefs, is a violation of the sacred dignity of the human person.
4. Justice and equity are essential to peacemaking among individuals, families, communities, and nations.
5. Global engagement should be guided by the values of justice, mutual responsibility, and compassion for human flourishing.
6. Religion and faith can play a significant role in healing divisions and in shaping a just and inclusive society.
7. Commitment to regular, ongoing dialogue is essential to overcome religious intolerance, terrorism, and violence

Plan of Action

We commit ourselves and appeal to fellow believers to:

✿ Follow co-existence with engagement to promote:

- A commitment to respect for human life and dignity, promoting good neighborly relations and sharing joys and troubles,
- A commitment to work for the well-being of all,
- A commitment to develop deeper understandings of our respective religious heritages,
- A commitment to sharing of spiritual experiences;

✿ Engage in practical interfaith programs at local, national, regional, and global levels to promote the common good by:

- Promoting religious freedom as an integral part of human rights,
- Fostering education for peace-building in our churches and mosques, providing for the moral formation to the younger generations,
- Working toward the eradication of systemic injustice, extreme poverty, illiteracy, and disease,
- Supporting communities of believers in their profession of faith and worship of God;

✿ Stand against the de-humanizing influences of moral relativism, consumerism, and greed;

✿ Confront issues of unjust treatment, violence, and oppression of women and children in many sectors of society;

✿ Join with government and community leaders to examine and refine public attitudes, policies, media coverage, and practices based on discrimination against others;

✿ Reject and condemn attacks on sacred places or using them for armed conflict;

✿ Promote a new partnership among religious leaders, professional diplomats, and other leaders, particularly in situations where formal diplomatic talks have stalled;

✿ Challenge the media to provide more accurate and balanced coverage of religion-based news, such as stemming the tide of Islamophobia;

✿ Commit themselves to seek, in cooperation with other religious and political leaders throughout the world, a just solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, and a special status for the Holy Places;

✿ Continue the process of dialogue among religious leaders initiated at this Summit and encourage expanded efforts through outreach to additional leaders within our respective faith traditions and to other religious communities not represented at this Summit.

An announcement about the venue and dates of the next Summit will be forthcoming in the near future.

Signatories

Principals

Ayatollah Dr. Ahmad Iravani
Professor Dr. Ahmad Mohamed El Tayeb
His Eminence Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane

Shi'a Delegation

Imam Abdul Latif Berry
Imam Seyyed Mohammad Rizvi
Imam Sayid Hassan Al-Qazwini
Imam Mohammad Ali Elahi

Sunni Delegation

Prof. Dr. Mohamed Abdel Fadil M. Abdel Aziz
S.E. Cheikh Malek Shaar
Dr. Mahmoud Abdel Salam Azab
Ms. Maryam Ishag Muhammad Alkhalifa Sharief
Ms. Sanaa Aly Marei Makhoulouf

Anglican/Episcopalian Delegation

Mrs. Clare Amos
The Honorable Kjell Magne Bondevik
The Right Reverend Suheil Dawani
The Right Reverend Josiah Idowu-Fearon
The Right Reverend Pierre W. Whalon

Vatican Delegation

Professor Dr. Christian Troll SJ
Professor Lamin Sanneh
Reverend Father James Massa
Dr. Sandra T. Keating

Summit Steering Committee

Ayatollah Dr. Ahmad Iravani
The Reverend Canon John L. Peterson
Ms. Maryam Ishag Muhammad Alkhalifa Sharief
The Reverend Monsignor Robert J. Vitillo