



Multi-Faith Centre



*Asia-Pacific Interfaith Symposium
on*

Women, Faith and a Culture of Peace

Multi-Faith Centre
Griffith University, Nathan Campus
Brisbane, Australia

February 2008
Saturday 23rd mid-afternoon to
Monday 25th mid-afternoon

A Culture of Peace, as promoted by United Nations' agencies, NGOs and peace educators, encompasses values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence in all manifestations. It also seeks to address the root causes of conflicts and peacelessness, and to resolve them through creative and participatory non-violent strategies

Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, established in 2002, is a venue where people from diverse faith, religious and spirituality traditions can deepen their understanding of their own faith and actively participate in interfaith dialogue, education and action. It also seeks to engage in education, research and advocacy in interfaith and intra-faith dialogue towards a culture of peace in local, national and global contexts. Key programs and activities of the MFC include multi-faith prayers, interfaith and intra-faith dialogue forums, symposia, conferences, workshops, exhibitions, concerts, curriculum development, in-service training, publications and networking.

Believing Women for a Culture of Peace is an interfaith women's organisation operating in Brisbane, Australia since early 2004, with occasional activities in other Queensland locations. It aims to promote understanding, respectful relationships and mutual support among women of diverse faiths, spiritual paths and cultures, and to develop the capacity of members to be proactive in transforming conflict and generating a culture of peace. Many of its activities seek to engage wider public audiences. It is committed to building partnerships with other local organisations or initiatives addressing prejudice and divisiveness, and has a vision of forging links between women's interfaith initiatives within the region and beyond.

Vision & Purposes

Around the world, people of faith are actively engaged in developing interfaith relationships and initiating a wide variety of interfaith activities. Complemented by intra-faith dialogue, this broad movement is making a critical contribution in our times to efforts to overcome destructive conflict and build just and peaceful societies in our world.

The symposium will recognise and highlight **the unique contribution that women of diverse faith communities in the Asia-Pacific region are making to the interfaith movement and interfaith initiatives in the broader social context.** It will help to facilitate the sharing of information, insights and skills, and explore ways to strengthen their efforts to transform conflict and foster peace.

The symposium will also **provide a forum for learning about hopeful intra-faith dialogue initiatives emerging within faith communities and institutions, for empowering women and promoting their equitable participation in their respective faiths** and the wider society.

Objectives

- ❖ Strengthen efforts of women's faith/interfaith groups and initiatives to transform conflict and foster a "culture of peace" at all levels;
- ❖ Develop understanding of critical elements in conflict generation and prevention from women's experience and perspectives;
- ❖ Provide opportunities for participants to learn from "best practice" in interfaith activities for conflict resolution and peace-building;
- ❖ Learn about positive initiatives within faith communities and institutions, including by men in those communities and institutions, to empower women and promote their equitable participation;
- ❖ Enhance the capacity and leadership potential of women engaged in interfaith initiatives to be involved in relevant policy and decision-making arenas;
- ❖ Build stronger and sustainable connections among women's interfaith initiatives within the region and beyond for sharing of resources and mutual support.

Programme Highlights

- ❖ **Plenary panels** on interfaith and intra-faith dialogue themes relevant to "women and faith in building a culture of peace" in today's society and world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.
- ❖ **Concurrent workshops** on a wide range of topics related to women and interfaith and intra-faith dialogue and perspectives
- ❖ **Small group processes**, to allow participants to develop and share insights into women's interfaith and intra-faith experiences and initiatives.
- ❖ **Prayer and reflection** as an integral dimension of the whole symposium.
- ❖ **Social activities & entertainment** including an interfaith dinner and musicale.

Themes of Major Panels

- 🖼 Women in interfaith: Initiatives, challenges and successes
- 🖼 Affirming human rights, and transcending conflicts: Where can faith take us?
- 🖼 Just, compassionate and sustainable Earth communities: Faith and interfaith contributions
- 🖼 Gathering the wisdom, charting the future

Invited Panellists

Prof. Madhu Kishwar

Editor, Manushi
INDIA

Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne

Executive Director, Sarvodaya Sharmadana Movement
SRI LANKA

Venerable Dr. Yifa [TBC]

University of the West, Los Angeles
UNITED STATES

Dr. Pushpa Wood

President, Wellington Inter-Faith Council
NEW ZEALAND

Tessa Mackenzie

Interfaith Search Fiji
FIJI

Sr. Estrella Castalone, FMA

Executive Secretary, Association of Major Religious
Superiors in the Philippines, PHILIPPINES

Zainah Anwar [TBC]

Executive Director, Sisters in Islam
MALAYSIA

Gyung-Lan Jung [TBC]

Chair of the Committee for International Solidarity,
Women Making Peace, KOREA

Anne Lapapan Supamanta [TBC]

International Network of Engaged Buddhist
THAILAND

Siti Musdah Mulia

Indonesian Conference on Religions for Peace
INDONESIA

Arini Beaumaris

Baha'i Council of Queensland
AUSTRALIA

Darlismiati Leigh

Believing Women for a Culture of Peace
AUSTRALIA

Prof. Toh Swee-Hin

Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University
AUSTRALIA

Beatriz Colmo [TBC]

MINDANAWON
PHILIPPINES

Patricia Hindmarsh [TBC]

Member of Women and the Australian Church
AUSTRALIA

Alifatud Darojati Kusumaningtyas

Center for Education and Information on Islam and
Women's Rights Issues (RAHIMA)
INDONESIA

Josie Lacey, OAM [TBC]

Convener, Women's Interfaith Network
AUSTRALIA

More panellists to be confirmed.

WORKSHOPS

“Country as ‘sacred text’: the place of Indigenous Spirituality in an International Interfaith Project” (Joan Hendriks, Australia)

“Advocating for the Environmental Rights of Local Communities” (Betty Tio Manar, Down to Earth, Indonesia)

“Don't Believe Everything You Hear; Girls and Islam” (Nora Amath & Halim Rane, AMARAH, Australia)

“Women, Faith and Racism in the Mass Media” (Racism Project, Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care, Australia)

“The Islamic Path of Sufism as a Basis of Social Justice” (Rashida Joseph, Australia)

“Supporting Women's Interfaith Initiative through Creative Media” (Sharon Bhagwan Rolls & Fane Lomani, femLINKPACIFIC, Fiji)

“Initiatives and Experiences in Women's Interfaith Training Programmes” (Sr Cecilia Ido, St. Scholastica's College, Philippines)

“The Trafficking of Women – Modern Day Slavery: Building Faith-based Networks to Combat it.” (Sr. Pauline Coll, Australian Catholic Religious against Trafficking in Humans, Australia)

“Women & Spirituality in Islam” (Faiza El-Higzi, Australia)

“Dalit Culture Appropriate for a Culture of Buddhism: Reclaiming Equality, Fraternity and Feminine Values for Liberation” (P. Lalida, Director, ADECOM Network, India)

“Women in Traditional Conflict Resolution Practices among Muslims and Lumads” (Ofelia Durante, Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Philippines)

“Women in the Philippine Church, Roles, Images, and Engagements with the Institutional Church” (Leah Vidal, Executive Director, Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue, Philippines)

Other workshops to be confirmed

A registration form is enclosed. It can also be downloaded from the Multi-Faith Centre website www.griffith.edu.au/centre/mfc/ or BWCP website www.believingwomen.org.au

The registration fee covers all meals (except breakfast) and refreshments, including the main conference dinner, and a conference kit.

Co-sponsoring Organizations

Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS), University of Queensland
Always People
Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines
Australian Federation of Islamic Councils
Australian Muslim Advocates for the Rights of all Humanity (AMARAH)
Baha'i Council of Queensland
Brahma Kumaris, Brisbane
Buddhist Council of Queensland
Catholic Commission for Ecumenism & Interfaith Relations, Brisbane
Centre for Cultural Research, University of New South Wales
Centre for Public Culture & Arts, Griffith University
Centre for the Study of Contemporary Islam, University of Melbourne
Chung Tian Buddhist Temple
Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations [TBC]
Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, Gold Coast
Edmund Rice Education [TBC]
Executive Council of Australian Jewry
Fiji Senior Citizens Association of Queensland
Interfaith Multicultural Forum, Brisbane
Interfaith Search Fiji
International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Thailand
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Queensland Regional Meeting
Sarvodaya Sharmadana Movement, Sri Lanka
Social Action Office, Catholic Religious Australia, Queensland
Sunshine Coast Interfaith Network
Wellington Inter-Faith Council, New Zealand
Women Making Peace, Korea [TBC]
World Council of Muslims for Interfaith Relations, Australasia

Other sponsors to be confirmed

ACCOMMODATION

Comfort Inn

Robertson Gardens

281 Kessels Road
Robertson. Qld 4109. Australia
(Five-minute walk to Griffith University.)

You can make a reservation by phone.

Phone: +61 (0)7 3875 1999

Toll Free: 1800 777 374

You can make a reservation online: Visit
<http://www.robertsongardens.com.au>

**We can make the reservation for you
but you will have to pay directly to the
hotel.**

Rate per day: Hotel Rooms

_____ Single AUD\$110

_____ Twin share: AUD\$64 each

Rate per day: Villas:

_____ Three guests: AUD\$45 each

_____ Four guests: AUD\$38 each

**Limited number of host families available.
First come, first served.**

IMMIGRATION

For participants requiring an Australian visa, **processing takes a minimum of 6 weeks.** We advise that you start filing your application as soon as possible. Before the Australian Visa Office in your country will consider your application they will want the following evidence:

- 1) your registration for the conference (including paying the registration fee – unless you are a scholarship recipient)
- 2) your official invitation to participate in the conference

Once you have registered, the Conference Secretariat will:

- 1) send you a letter in support of your visa application.
- 2) send the same information to the Australian Immigration Office in Brisbane

We will be sending more information about visiting Australia when your registration is confirmed.