



WE CAN COOPERATE FOR PEACE



Religions for Peace

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

Religions for Peace—the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition—advances common action among the world's religious communities for peace. *Religions for Peace* consists of a World Council of senior religious leaders elected at World Assemblies, five Regional and more than seventy National Inter-religious Councils, and Networks of Religious Youth and

Women of Faith. Guided by respect for religious differences and a vision of the world's religious communities cooperating effectively for peace, *Religions for Peace* assists religious communities to collaborate on deeply held and widely shared moral concerns.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TO BUILD PEACE THROUGH COMMON ACTION

Religions for Peace adopted a four-year Strategic Plan, which places a priority focus on transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, working for human development, and protecting the earth. "At a time in history when pervasive violence threatens the human family, and religions are portrayed as a source of violent conflict and human suffering, religious communities face a stark choice: the status quo, which leads to escalating violence, or the path of multi-religious cooperation for peace. We choose the second path."

To download a copy of the Strategic Plan, please visit: <http://religionsforpeace.org/resources/reports/index>

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PHOTO CREDITS

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WE CAN TAKE ACTION TOGETHER

Religious beliefs differ. Nevertheless, in every village on every continent in the world, most religious believers share some very basic moral convictions... the inviolable dignity of human life, the right to live free from oppression and extreme poverty, and the importance of caring for our earth. These **shared moral beliefs** provide a foundation for action in *Religions for Peace*. No time has ever been more urgent for multi-religious cooperation for peace. Principled cooperation can respectfully align the deep reservoirs of religiously motivated caring into **common action**.



Letter from the Moderator



Dear Friends:

Our global family of *Religions for Peace* continues in its primary task of advancing multi-religious collaboration for peace. This task requires fidelity to basic principles designed to ensure respect for religious differences, vision and patience. To move

forward on the pilgrimage of cooperation, we depend on the spirit of mutual trust and respect already so tangibly present in our midst. We must nurture this mutual trust and respect among religious communities around the world.

Our constituency is vast. More than 85 percent of the world's population understand themselves to be heirs of religious traditions and members of religious communities. The size of our constituency offers a hint of the actual power of multi-religious cooperation to transform the world—it can bring religious teachings and experiences of compassion, mercy, and care to the service of all humanity.

Throughout 2007, I had the privilege of traveling to help advance our vision of peace—one in which wars and violent conflicts are transformed, extreme poverty is eliminated, and our earth is protected. I met members of the *Religions for Peace* family. At every turn, I experienced joy and gratitude—joy upon meeting people with sincere religious convictions filled with a passion for peace, and gratitude that these people were expressing their religiously motivated care through the mission and principled approach of *Religions for Peace*.

One encounter especially meaningful for me was the *Religions for Peace* World Council Executive Committee at the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. There, twelve religious leaders of different faiths forged consensus on important issues.



“We must listen to one another about our respective faiths and then search for common moral standards. Each religion has its own ways of grasping the inviolable dignity of each person, related moral codes that underline the importance of fairness and justice and the healing power of compassion. Rooted in diverse understandings of faith, these moral teachings are a priceless living

We welcomed two new bodies into our family: the *Religions for Peace* Middle East/North Africa Council and the Inter-religious Council of Palestine (*Religions for Peace* Palestine). The Executive Committee also offered the good offices of *Religions for Peace* in connection with important developments in Muslim-Christian dialogue. It renewed its call for dialogue and participatory governance in Burma, offering its solidarity to the faith communities in Burma and the Government of Myanmar to assist in building a just peace. Finally, we endorsed the Strategic Plan designed to further develop our multi-religious alliance and strengthening our mission.

These commitments to common action taken by such diverse religious leaders demonstrate the power and relevance of multi-faith cooperation. It is both an honor and an inspiration to be a member of the *Religions for Peace* family. Our family is centered on the religious communities, which bring their vision, integrity, and moral witness to our common work. Our family is brilliantly and effectively served by our Secretary General and his staff team. The tasks ahead are large, but religious communities working together in *Religions for Peace* can make an irreplaceable difference.

Our mission is noble, deeply human, and profoundly religious. It is a mission based on the recognition that each of us is called to be faithful to our religious traditions. It builds on the recognition that we share many moral convictions and that such shared moral beliefs provide a platform for common action for peace. I am grateful for all you have done and for the service you will offer in the days to come.

In shared commitment to the mission of *Religions for Peace*,

(The Very Reverend) Leonid Kishkovsky



Letter from the Secretary General



Dear Colleagues:

“In Buddhism, we are taught to love our enemies,” said Venerable Tep Vong, the elderly Supreme Patriarch of the Buddhist Community in Cambodia in answer to my question.

We were in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, the epicenter of violence in Sri Lanka, working to support our Sri Lankan brothers and sisters as they built *Religions for Peace* Sri Lanka to address twenty-five years of ongoing civil war. We were resting for lunch, and I had asked the Venerable how he had coped when he was mistakenly left for dead in a ditch by the Khmer Rouge during the genocide that killed a quarter of his beloved fellow Cambodians. That was three decades ago, and the elderly Venerable clearly thought nothing of leaving the heavy duties of home and traveling into the heart of the conflict zone in Sri Lanka with other *Religions for Peace* Co-Presidents.

A quiet, clear expression of spirit was unmistakably present in Venerable Tep Vong. His modesty made it all the more manifest. Powerful expressions of spirit are present all across the *Religions for Peace* coalition wherever we are working together to transform violent conflict, address extreme poverty and protect our earth. I have come to recognize them as our greatest strength, even if it is that about which we are usually most quiet.

In our approach to multi-religious cooperation, we wisely focus on the shared moral values that can provide to us a framework for collaborative action. In this way, we work to respect the differences of each religious community, even as we labor together for peace.

But there is a hidden “more” at the center of each person’s commitment to peace. Religious people—each in their own way—draw strength from their respective religious experiences.

The human spirit can express itself powerfully—full of hope and compassion—in the worst as well as in the best of situations. Again and again, in *Religions for Peace* I have observed that persons in the night of extreme suffering—like the Venerable Tep Vong—bear the unbearable, find hope where there appear to be no grounds for hope, and forgive the unforgivable. This is a strength that each religion knows, cultivates and expresses in its own way.

This strength of the human spirit can also express itself in a deep-seated joy and compassion that commits to caring for others, nurtures priceless human virtues and works for peace with justice in season and out.

In *Religions for Peace*, we work to respectfully engage the unique moral strengths and community structures of each participating religious community in the work of peace. There is both principle and power in our approach. But at the deepest center of our work, there is another factor. Each participant brings his or her heart as a religious believer to our shared labor. We don’t leave our religion at the door when we work together in *Religions for Peace*. Rather, everyone quietly welcomes their own religious experience as their greatest strength. Each comes—instructed by their own religious tradition—alert to how their heart lies open to goodness and mercy despite the heavy presence of tragedy and human perfidy.

This is the hidden strength of *Religions for Peace* and it is quietly at work in all that is shared in this Annual Report.

In peace,

Dr. William F. Vendley

legacy, essential for human flourishing. Respecting religious differences while working to identifying shared moral standards can help us to build a common future that can embrace religious diversity, dialogue and cooperation. No organization can help us do this better in action than *Religions for Peace*.”

COMMON ACTION FOR PEACE: GLIMPSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

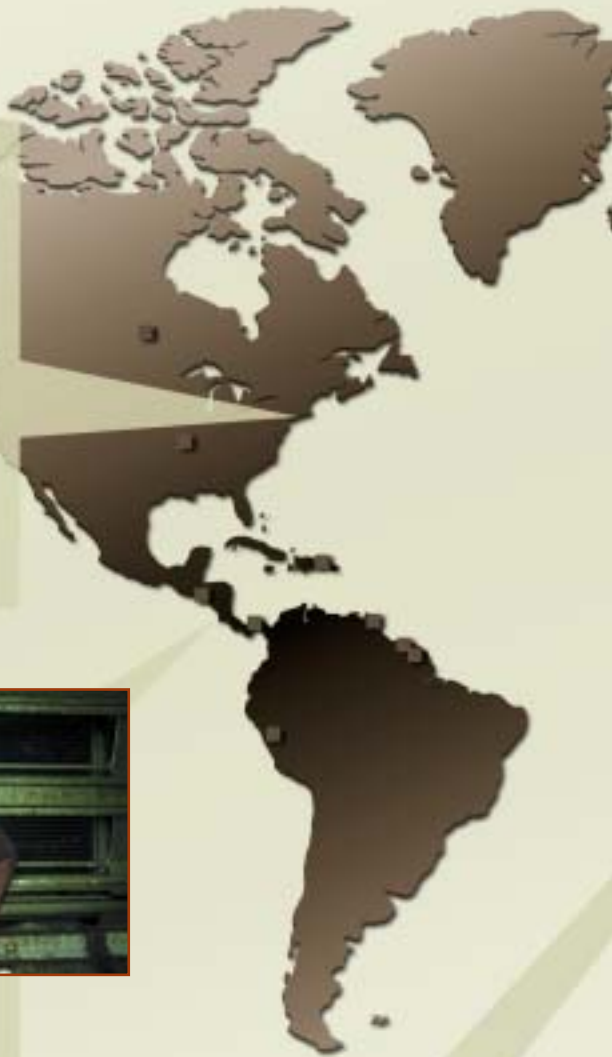
Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition of Inter-religious Councils and Networks of Youth and Women of Faith, mobilizes faith communities around the world to cooperate together for peace. These two pages help illustrate just a few of the actions taken by the *Religions for Peace* in 2007.



ADVANCING "SHARED SECURITY"

Religions for Peace advanced the notion of "shared security" in major international forums, including the United Nations' Alliance of Civilizations and the Helsinki Process. "Shared Security" focuses on the

fundamental reciprocity of all persons—the fact that the security of one is intimately related to the security of others—and the fundamental vulnerability of the human state. It builds upon and complements the notion of "human security" that has been creatively advanced in UN circles. The "shared" dimension of human security grows ever more relevant in today's interdependent world. A series of meetings in Alexandria, Egypt, focused on the unique ways religious communities can mobilize their moral and spiritual heritages to advance shared security in the Middle East.



ELIMINATING EXTREME POVERTY

Nearly 3 billion people around the world live on less than \$2 a day. In Latin America and Africa, *Religions for Peace* advanced poverty alleviation strategies and promoted the rights and well-being of children and families. It also worked to empower women and girls to become key advocates and agents for reducing poverty. For example, the *Religions for Peace* Liberia Women of Faith Network provided leadership training for the fight against poverty and advocated for the enforcement of existing anti-poverty legislation.



COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE Violence against women threatens the well-being of the human family. One in three women will suffer abuse because of her gender. Gender violence increases the vulnerability of some women to HIV and AIDS. *Religions for Peace* has responded by supporting the efforts of religious leaders to help stop violence against women. In Latin America and Africa, senior religious leaders issued calls to break the silence around gender violence and to promote the equality of women. In eight African countries—Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia—*Religions for Peace* Councils and Women of Faith and Youth Networks engaged in national advocacy to stop violence against women and girls.



PROMOTING DIALOGUE Trust building and reconciliation between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim youth in Israel and Palestine are essential for peace in the region. The *Religions for Peace* Jerusalem Inter-religious Young Adult Council was launched by local religious youth to promote dialogue and build needed bridges between their communities.



PEACEBUILDING In no region is multi-religious cooperation more urgent than in the Middle East, where extremists continue to misuse religion as an excuse for violence. *Religions for Peace* supported the efforts of local religious leaders to establish, respectively, *Religions for Peace* Palestine and *Religions for Peace* Middle East/North Africa. These leaders pledged to work together to help forge a just and lasting peace in Israel and Palestine and across the region.



ADVOCATING FOR PEACE After a violent crackdown on peaceful protesters by the Myanmar authorities in September 2007, *Religions for Peace's* response included a campaign by the *Religions for Peace* Global Youth Network. More than 3,000 messages of support for the Buddhist monks of Burma from people of different faiths in almost a hundred countries were delivered to the ASEAN Chair in Singapore. The appeals, addressed to Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe, urged the government of Myanmar to release detained protesters and enter into peaceful dialogue.

■ indicates the *Religions for Peace* Inter-religious Councils. For a full list, turn to page 15.

Religions for Peace advances a positive notion of peace that includes a commitment to transform violent conflict, promote just and harmonious societies, advance human development and protect the earth. A special commitment is made to address the misuse of religion in support of violence.

GLOBAL AGENDA

TRANSFORMING VIOLENT CONFLICT

***Religions for Peace* is working to transform conflict in some of the world's most troubled places through conflict prevention and resolution, to address the root causes of terrorism and the related misuse of religion, and to advance disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.**

[Africa]

While Darfur gains headlines, many regions in Africa are suffering from violent conflict, including the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes, and West Africa. *Religions for Peace* has been contributing to peace efforts in these areas with significant impact. The African Council of Religious Leaders (*Religions for Peace* Africa) is providing a growing leadership role in addressing conflict on the continent.

East Africa. Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have been relatively more stable than other countries in Africa, but the conflict in Northern Uganda and unsettled border situations—including in Sudan, Somalia, and Democratic Republic of Congo—make it critical to engage religious communities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

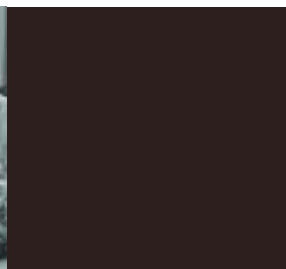
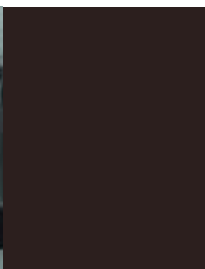
One key approach for *Religions for Peace* has been to strengthen the ability of women of faith to be front-line actors in conflict transformation. The *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network, in partnership with UNESCO, brought together women of faith from Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda to enhance their skills in conflict transformation and to increase their visibility as substantial leaders in faith-based conflict transformation. Following the workshop, the women conducted local inter-faith actions, mobilizing more than 200 women of faith as peace builders in their respective countries. A similar training was conducted for women from Burundi, DR Congo, and Rwanda.



TRANSFORMING CONFLICT HORN OF AFRICA

Conflict in Somalia has led to a new cycle of violence in the Horn of Africa region. The Horn has been the site of numerous intra-state and civil conflicts that have afflicted millions. *Religions for Peace* Africa—in partnership with the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches—brought together Muslim and Christian religious leaders from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda to start a peace initiative focused on addressing the Somali conflict in the context of regional peace and security.

Religions for Peace Africa is facilitating alliances with religious leaders in Somalia and neighboring countries in support of the peacebuilding process. During a solidarity visit to Somalia, religious leaders from the region met senior Somali Muslim leaders who pledged to convey Islamic messages of peace and be active peacemakers, advocates for the voiceless and vulnerable, and partners in dialogue to the benefit of all Somalis.



Great Lakes. This region has suffered some of the worst and most gruesome violence over the past decade or more, most recently in the eastern areas of the DR Congo where millions have been killed, displaced and traumatized. *Religions for Peace* has been working to place religious communities at the center of peacebuilding efforts. In May 2007 a historic gathering, hosted by the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (*Religions for Peace* Uganda) brought together religious leaders, including women, of different faiths from seven countries to forge a Great Lakes inter-religious peacebuilding strategy. The leaders stressed the importance of cooperation in promoting peace in the region and mandated *Religions for Peace* to provide a mechanism to strengthen multi-religious engagement and solidarity across borders. In addition, a new Inter-religious Council was formed in the Great Lakes Region.

A *Religions for Peace* Africa delegation undertook a mission with the Inter-religious Council of the Democratic Republic of Congo (*Religions for Peace* DR Congo) to the troubled Eastern DR Congo to advance peace with local religious leaders. As a result, local religious leaders and members of *Religions for Peace* DR Congo participated in the Goma Peace Conference in January 2008, which embraced the essential role of religious communities in the peace process.

West Africa. The countries of West Africa face numerous grave challenges, including armed conflicts that either continue unchecked or threaten to resurface. The related tensions cross the borders of countries, religions, and ethnicities. *Religions for Peace* West African Inter-religious Council Coordinating Committee played a crucial role in building confidence within and among communities and forging a lasting peace in the region. *Religions for Peace* West Africa made a solidarity visit to the Republic of Guinea, the site of escalating violence. Its initiative was acknowledged by the government of Guinea as being critical to peacebuilding.

To encourage good governance, the Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone (*Religions for Peace* Sierra Leone), played a critical role in monitoring the country's landmark 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections. It monitored the election and engaged parliamentarians and other elected government officials to ensure that they fulfilled their roles and responsibilities in preparation for the election and subsequent transitions. In the aftermath of the national elections, the *Religions for Peace* Sierra Leone President served as the Chair of the Post National Election Transitional Committee.



TRANSFORMING CONFLICT SRI LANKA

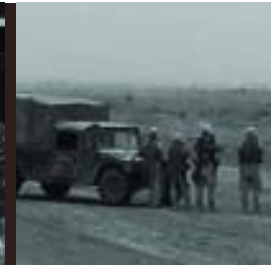
To counter the worst violence and ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka since the ceasefire agreement in 2002, *Religions for Peace* facilitated private negotiations and a series of public consultations with senior leaders of major religious communities, the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, (LTTE, also known as the Tamil Tigers), a separatist militant organization. As a result, in the face of escalating fighting and counter to all reasonable expectations, *Religions for Peace* was able to convene an international multi-religious summit in Jaffna, in the heart of the conflict zone. The Summit supported Sri Lankan religious leaders in their united call for sustainable peace. This historic breakthrough was applauded by the international diplomatic community, and it has led to a series of follow-up actions by the religious leaders.

Religions for Peace's high-level religious diplomacy and inter-religious mechanisms have contributed to the rejection of extremist tendencies by Sri Lanka's religious leaders and led them to establish a formal inter-religious council, *Religions for Peace* Sri Lanka, as a platform for their ongoing mediation and facilitation in the peace process.

[Middle East]

Iraq. In response to persistent sectarian violence, *Religions for Peace* has supported the desire of Iraqi religious leaders to work together. To that end *Religions for Peace*, in collaboration with the Al-Hakim Foundation and New York University's Center for Dialogue, brought together a dozen senior Iraqi Muslim leaders—Sunni and Shi'ite—at the United Nations to present a unified response to religious extremist ideologies that are used as an excuse

(continued on page 10)



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for violence. Advancing a vision of “Iraq for all Iraqis” was recognized as essential to overcoming sectarian violence in Iraq. *Religions for Peace’s* principled approach to multi-religious cooperation earned the trust of the Iraqi religious leaders to convene even during the most difficult of circumstances, often at great risk to personal safety.

“Multi-religious cooperation for peace is the hallmark of *Religions for Peace*. This cooperation includes but also goes beyond dialogue and bears fruit in common concrete action. Through *Religions for Peace*, diverse religious communities discern ‘deeply held and widely shared’ moral concerns... *Religions for Peace* translates these shared moral concerns into concrete multi-religious action.”

– from the *Religions for Peace* Strategic Plan

[Latin America & the Caribbean]

Caribbean. *Religions for Peace* is engaged in a united effort to reject terrorism and address the manipulation and misuse of religion that is often connected to it. In June 2007 the *Religions for Peace* Caribbean Sub-Regional Council was meeting in Guyana when arrests were made in an alleged terror plot directed at New York’s JFK airport involving nationals from Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. The Caribbean religious leaders—Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Afro-Caribbean and Baha’i—immediately condemned terrorism in any part of the world, whether in the name of religion or with any other motives, but they also cautioned strongly against profiling or stereotyping based on religious persuasion.

PROMOTING JUST AND HARMONIOUS SOCIETIES

For *Religions for Peace*, peace means more than just an end to war. It also includes the ongoing work of advancing justice and reconciliation, building healthy societies, and keeping women and children safe from violence and ensuring that they have the opportunities to contribute as stakeholders in their societies.

[Africa]

West Africa. *Religions for Peace* facilitated the involvement of religious leaders in Burundi and Sierra Leone in key dialogues of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a new body of the United Nations established to support longer-term efforts to consolidate sustainable peace in countries emerging from conflict.

Religions for Peace succeeded in advancing the role of religious communities in PBC initiatives on the national and global levels. In Burundi, the national government and PBC jointly welcomed religious communities as key partners in the national peacebuilding and reconciliation process. The country’s religious leaders were encouraged in their efforts to advance good governance and reconciliation through community mobilization.

[Latin America & the Caribbean]

Latin America faces many challenges to achieve social justice and harmony, from violence to dramatic economic disparity and legal exclusion. Promoting a culture of peace is one key element in addressing these challenges. *Religions for Peace*, together with UNESCO, with the support of UNICEF and World Vision, organized the Third Meeting of the Latin American Inter-Religious Network on Peace Education in Rio de Janeiro. More than thirty religious leaders and representatives of religious educational institutions of Latin America, from Catholic and Evangelical churches, Jewish and Muslim communities, and Indigenous and Afro-Latin American Spiritualities, took part in the meeting. Participants committed to promoting a culture of peace among the families who belong to their faith communities and encouraged similar actions in religious educational institutions. A Directive Council of the Network was appointed to coordinate follow-up actions across the region.



WORKING FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Religions for Peace advances human development by promoting the rights and well-being of children and families, advocating for the empowerment of women, working to alleviate poverty, and responding to HIV and AIDS.

[Expanding the Response to HIV and AIDS]

Religions for Peace continued in its commitment to expand the involvement and leadership of religious communities in the response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic globally, regionally and nationally. During 2007 it produced some important new resources (see page 16) and strengthened its range of global partnerships on HIV and AIDS, including being awarded a grant by the US government.

Africa. During 2007, *Religions for Peace* affiliates in ten countries with HIV and AIDS programs raised more than \$6 million, provided services for more than 25,000 people and trained more than 2,000 religious leaders, caregivers, and local volunteers. These *Religions for Peace* Councils continue to exercise growing leadership in national AIDS policy bodies in their countries. At a meeting with the African Union (AU) Commission on Social Affairs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, *Religions for Peace* took the opportunity to advocate for stronger collaboration between the AU and religious communities in confronting the pandemic that has decimated so many communities.

Asia. The *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network and Shanti Ashram launched in India the Prathiba project with support from UNICEF to mobilize women religious leaders from eight faith traditions to support those living with HIV and AIDS. The project trained more than 500 women in six locations all across India, and provided ten small grants to women of faith groups that offered greater AIDS awareness, care and support for people living with HIV, and worked to reduce stigma.

Latin America & the Caribbean. *Religions for Peace* was an organizer of the first inter-faith pre-gathering on HIV in Latin America at the Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Forum on HIV/AIDS and STDs in Buenos Aires with support from UNICEF and USAID. Leaders from all faiths committed to strengthening their efforts to address all dimensions of the AIDS epidemic, particularly the status of women, affirming that basic equality is a human right and a matter of justice. Participants agreed to form a regional interfaith network on HIV and AIDS, coordinated by *Religions for Peace*. The network held its constitutive meeting with the cooperation of the Pan American Health



Photo courtesy of The Women, Faith and Development Alliance

THE WOMEN, FAITH, AND DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

The injustice of extreme poverty is borne most heavily by women and girls. They make up the majority of the world's poorest people, and are often excluded from education and employment opportunities, denied property and legal rights, and under-represented in political leadership. In order to support religious communities and their leaders in their search for effective pathways out of poverty, *Religions for Peace* is building capacity related to the empowerment of women and girls as agents of poverty reduction throughout its global coalition of Inter-religious Councils and Networks of Women of Faith and Youth.

To advance this commitment, *Religions for Peace* became a founding partner in the Women, Faith, and Development Alliance (WFDA), a unique coalition of internationally focused faith, development and women's organizations working together to end poverty through women's empowerment. WFDA advocates with key governmental and international policy makers to increase focus on gender and women in campaigns to realize the Millenium Development Goals and end extreme global poverty.

Organization, UNAIDS, and UNFPA; it committed to build trust and cooperation among religious leaders and people living with HIV.



[Millennium Development Goals]

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) seek to reduce extreme poverty and help achieve universal primary education and gender equality by 2015. In partnership with the Millennium Campaign, *Religions for Peace* supported faith communities in global, regional and national advocacy to fight poverty. For example, in Africa, *Religions for Peace* organized an advocacy media event in Nairobi to coincide with the midpoint of the MDG campaign. Advocacy actions were also launched in Kenya, DR Congo, Liberia, and Uganda. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a forum to advance the MDGs was co-sponsored by the Government of Argentina and the UN Development Programme, and the *Religions for Peace* Latin American and Caribbean Council. The Council also made an advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. to promote the role of developed countries in achieving the MDGs. In partnership with Catholic Relief Services and Church World Service, visits were made to such organizations as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Stand Up Campaign. *Religions for Peace* Councils and Women of Faith and Youth Networks around the world participated in “Stand Up and Be Counted” anti-poverty events on 16–17 October 2007, joining 43.7 million people in 127 countries. The campaign encouraged people to “stand up” to be counted in support of the MDGs. Nearly 4,000 people participated in a DR Congo event organized by the *Religions for Peace* Youth Network. *Religions for Peace* Kenya mobilized its constituency in Korogocho where some of the poorest urban populations live.

Advancing Women’s Rights The 51st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York helped address violence against women and girls. In 2007, CSW focused on female genital mutilation, forced marriages, sexual assault, and HIV/AIDS. A key panel was the “Role of Religious Leaders and Communities in Ending Violence against Girls and Women,” sponsored by *Religions for Peace* in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This multi-religious panel highlighted the pervasiveness of violence against girls and women and the factors that contribute to inaction and silence around this issue. Other sessions co-sponsored by *Religions for Peace* included “Ethical Perspectives on Transitional Justice and the Girl Child,” and “A Dialogue on Women’s Empowerment, Faith, and Development.”

“To achieve our goals, we have to remember the importance of grassroots relationships and networks, and of formal and informal education of youth and adults. The role of women is essential in these fields. Sisters, we need your ideas, your input, and your experience to advance together.”

– Ms. Mehrézia Labidi-Maiza, Coordinator,
Religions for Peace
Global Women of Faith Network

PROTECTING THE EARTH



Religions for Peace focuses on the links between environmental degradation and threats to peace, providing solidarity for its network members in situations of environmental insecurity and addressing global warming through advocacy.

Climate Change. More than 450 million people in twenty-nine countries are currently challenged by severe water shortages, and—due to increases in population and global warming—two thirds of the world’s population may face water insecurity by 2025. The *Religions for Peace* European Council of Religious Leaders, the International Water Academy, the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme, and the Stockholm International Water Institute organized a seminar on water, ethics and religion in Stockholm, Sweden. Representatives from a wide range of denominations identified shared moral concerns and then concrete actions to foster more sustainable water practices to be shared at international processes such as the upcoming 5th World Water Forum.

Religions for Peace also represented multi-religious communities at the United Nations conference on climate change. Attendees reviewed scientific evidence on climate change including its impact on indigenous peoples, water security, land use, and the politics of energy. *Religions for Peace* helped to shape a multi-sectoral commitment to address the urgent issues regarding the environment.

Religions for Peace continued in 2007 to strengthen its global network—welcoming new inter-religious councils to the *Religions for Peace* family and expanding its Global Women of Faith and Global Youth Networks.

STRENGTHENING RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

The *Religions for Peace* World Council advanced our global coalition of Inter-religious Councils and Women of Faith and Youth Networks by strengthening our internal working relationships around the world. The International Secretariat and Regional Council Secretariats consummated working memoranda of understanding designed to enhance cooperation across the entire *Religions for Peace* family.

In Africa, *Religions for Peace* helped form the Inter-religious Council of Benin (*Religions for Peace* Benin) and helped strengthen *Religions for Peace* Councils in Burundi, DR Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania as well as the Great Lakes region. In South Africa, a sub-regional network was formed in Kwa Zulu Natal Province. In the Caribbean, *Religions for Peace* Councils in Barbados, Guyana, Surinam, and Trinidad and Tobago have formed a sub-regional network.

[Inter-religious Councils]

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the *Religions for Peace* Councils in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Panama formed the Meso American Inter-religious Network. Also, *Religions for Peace* provided training and other technical assistance in Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador and Uruguay. In Europe, a new national Council was launched in Albania. In Asia, *Religions for Peace* held a series of private and public consultations with senior religious leaders in Bangladesh, Burma, India, Laos, Malaysia, and Singapore to build representative and action-oriented Councils in those countries. In Asia, as elsewhere around the world, partnership between the regional *Religions for Peace* Councils and *Religions for Peace* International in building new national Councils and Women of Faith and Youth Networks was advanced.

GLOBAL WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK

The *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network, under the leadership of its International Women's Coordinating Committee, developed an action plan that identified: 1) network building; 2) advancing peace and shared security; 3) equipping women of faith as agents of conflict transformation; and 4) addressing the links between gender, poverty and health as areas of primary concern for the next four years.

Religions for Peace Latin American and Caribbean Women of Faith Network launched an online forum for leaders to share success stories, challenges, and best practices to overcome violence against women. The *Religions for Peace* Kenya Women of Faith Network was launched in 2007 to address gender-based violence, advance human rights, and end extreme poverty. In addition, women of faith representatives of *Religions for Peace* in Europe and North America met to advance the formation of *Religions for Peace* European and North American Women of Faith Networks to be launched in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

Throughout the year, *Religions for Peace* continued its commitment to mainstream women of faith by placing senior women religious leaders in its high-level structures and engaging them in its action programs. Dr. Vinu Aram was named the first woman *Religions for Peace* Vice Moderator. Senior women religious leaders were on the front lines of conflict transformation in Sri Lanka, Somalia, West Africa, the Great Lakes region in Africa, Helsinki Process dialogues in Alexandria, Egypt, and at the United Nations.

THE GLOBAL WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Regional

African Women of Faith Network
Asian and Pacific Women of Faith Network
European Women of Faith Network
Latin American and Caribbean Women of Faith Network

Sub-Regional

Andean Women of Faith Network
Caribbean Women of Faith Network
Latin American Women of Faith Network
Meso-American Women of Faith Network

National

DR Congo Women of Faith Network
Ghana Women of Faith Network
Kenya Women of Faith Network
Liberia Women of Faith Network
Rwanda Women of Faith Network
Sierra Leone Women of Faith Network
Tanzania Women of Faith Network
Uganda Women of Faith Network
Zambia Women of Faith Network
India Women of Faith Network



Religions for Peace is a powerful global coalition of people of different faiths working together in more than seventy countries at local, national, regional, and international levels. *Religions for Peace* is working to strengthen its global coalition by establishing a strong shared identity throughout the network; exchanging information; building alliances among inter-religious councils and networks of religious youth and women of faith; and building partnership with key external stakeholders.

OPERATING A NETWORK

Religions for Peace worked as a partnership to strengthen the secretariats of the *Religions for Peace* Regional Councils in Africa, Europe, Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean; to build and strengthen new National Councils, and to build and strengthen existing *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith



and Youth Networks. To advance this work, *Religions for Peace* facilitated the building of “capacity for action” by conducting capacity assessments and providing related tools, initial grants, trainings and other relevant forms of technical assistance across the coalition.

In the Middle East, more than fifty religious youth from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria convened in Amman, Jordan, under the patronage of HRH Princess Sumaya bin El Hassan, to address escalating sectarian tensions at the *Religions for Peace* “Pluralism and Fanaticism” seminar.

To build alternatives to religious extremism, religious youth from eighteen Asian countries gathered in Singapore, with the support of the government and local religious communities, for the *Religions for Peace* “Choosing Hope, Taking Action” Summit of Asian Religious Youth Leaders. Their action plan includes a multi-religious youth-led conflict resolution program in Mindanao, Philippines, in 2008, with advocacy for peace at grassroots and high political levels.

In Latin America, more than twenty religious youth organizations held a regional summit on youth violence in Buenos Aires. Plans focused on building *Religions for Peace* National Youth Networks as mechanisms for youth-led peace education, awareness, and advocacy.

GLOBAL YOUTH NETWORK

The *Religions for Peace* Global Youth Network harnessed the energy and commitment of religious youth leaders of different faiths to advance cooperation for peace. It was led by a fifteen-member International Youth Committee (IYC), representing the world’s faith traditions and regions, elected at the 2006 World Youth Assembly in Hiroshima, Japan.

To help mainstream youth into *Religions for Peace* Councils and programs around the world, the IYC committed in 2007 to building *Religions for Peace* Youth Networks in Malaysia, Singapore, India, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana, Liberia, Tanzania, DR Congo, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, and Uruguay. In addition to advancing common action for peace by religious youth, this action will also strengthen the six *Religions for Peace* Regional Youth Networks.

GLOBAL YOUTH NETWORK INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

Regional

Africa Youth Network
Asia & Pacific Youth Network
Europe Youth Network

Latin America & Caribbean Youth Network
Middle East Youth Network
North America Youth Network



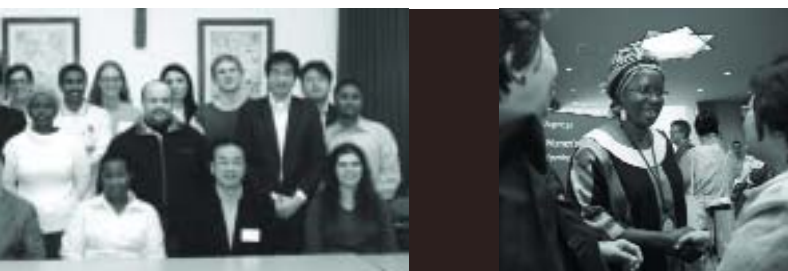


FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FORUM

Religions for Peace convened a second forum for faith-based humanitarian and development organizations to help identify avenues for fruitful cooperation, particularly regarding natural disaster relief, conflict transformation, and advocacy. Twenty-eight representatives from faith-based organizations (FBO) and governments participated in the dialogue, hosted by the Hindu Forum in London. This forum was initiated at the *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly in Kyoto, Japan, in 2006.

Using the case study method, the group reviewed on-the-ground projects that illustrate the potential benefits and challenges of multi-religious collaboration in four areas: emergency relief in natural disasters; emergency relief in man-made disasters (conflict); long-term development; and multi-religious advocacy. The case studies were followed by a dynamic dialogue on the value of and challenges to implementing multi-religious projects and advocacy campaigns. Areas of potential collaboration were raised and discussed.

Participants agreed that the potential benefits of multi-religious cooperation are highly significant and viewed the FBO Forum as a means of advancing cooperation to: build trust; create a learning forum to share best practices to help ensure continuous improvement in delivering humanitarian aid, community development, and peace building; facilitate joint advocacy; and promote joint research that advances multi-religious cooperation including the development of principles, codes of conduct and cases studies. *Religions for Peace* was mandated to convene the group again in 2008.



INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCILS AND AFFILIATED GROUPS



Africa

Regional Bodies:
African Council of Religious Leaders

Sub-Regional Bodies:
West Africa Inter-Religious Coordinating Committee

National Inter-Religious Councils and Groups:

The Inter-religious Council of Burundi

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Cameroon

The Forum of Religious Confessions of Cote d'Ivoire

Inter-religious Council of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Ethiopian Inter-Faith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action

Ghana Conference of *Religions for Peace*

Inter-religious Council of Guinea

Inter-religious Council of Kenya

Inter-religious Council of Liberia

Malawi Public Affairs Committee

Council of Religions of Mozambique

Nigeria Inter-religious Council

Interfaith Commission of Rwanda

Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* South Africa

Sudan Interreligious Council

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Tanzania

Inter-religious Council of Uganda

Zambia Interfaith Networking Group

Asia and the Pacific

Regional Bodies:
Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace*

National Inter-Religious Councils and Groups:

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Australia

Religions for Peace Bangladesh

Cambodian Interreligious Council

China Committee on Religion and Peace

Korean Council of Religionists

Religions for Peace India

Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Japan

The Religion and Peace Academy, Nepal

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* New Zealand

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Pakistan

Religions for Peace Philippines

Korean Conference on Religion and Peace

Interreligious Organisation, Singapore

National Council of *Religions for Peace* Sri Lanka

Religions for Peace Thailand

Europe

Regional Bodies:
European Council of Religious Leaders

Religions for Peace Europe

National Inter-Religious Councils and Groups:

Religions for Peace Austria

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Belgium
Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Religions for Peace Croatia

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* France

Religions for Peace Germany

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Italy

Interreligious Council of Kosovo/*Religions for Peace*

Religions for Peace Netherlands

Religions for Peace Poland

Religions for Peace Romania

Interreligious Council of Russia/*Religions for Peace*

World Conference on Religion and Peace/Sweden

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* United Kingdom

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Bodies:
Latin American and the Caribbean Council of Religious Leaders

National Inter-Religious Councils and Groups:

Argentine National Interreligious Committee

Barbados Interreligious Organization

Interreligious Dialogue Table of Bolivia

Abrahamic Forum of Chile

Interreligious Group of Colombia

Religions for Peace Costa Rica

Religions for Peace Dominican Republic

Inter-religious Meeting of Ecuador

Religions for Peace El Salvador

Interreligious Guatemalan Dialogue on Development

Interreligious Organization of Guyana

Interreligious Council of Mexico

Ecumenical Committee of Panama

Peruvian Inter-Religious Conference - *Religions for Peace*

Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Coalition of Puerto Rico

Inter-religious Council in Suriname

Interreligious Organization of Trinidad and Tobago

Jewish-Christian Fraternity of Uruguay

Committee of Relations between Churches and Synagogues Established in Venezuela

Middle East

National Inter-Religious Councils and Groups:

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Iraq

Inter-religious Coordinating Council in Israel

North America

National Inter-Religious Councils and Groups:

World Conference of *Religions for Peace* Canada

Religions for Peace USA

NEW PUBLICATIONS & TOOLS

In 2007, *Religions for Peace* prepared a range of materials and tools to help religious communities work together to build peace. All of these publications and the video may be downloaded from the Web site, www.religionsforpeace.org.



Strategic Plan

Religions for Peace adopted a four-year Strategic Plan, which places a priority focus on transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, working for human development, and protecting the earth.



Religions for Peace Global Women of Faith Network Plan of Action

The *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network Plan of Action, 2007-2011, embraces and expands the *Religions for Peace* Strategic Plan by identifying priority themes for *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network, including extending the Network and engaging it to build peace and advance shared security, transform conflict, tackle issues like gender violence, poverty and major threats to health.



HIV/AIDS: Advocacy & Media Manual

This training manual, used together with the participants' handbook, strengthens the advocacy and media relations skills of religious leaders at both national and community levels on behalf of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.



HIV/AIDS Scaling Up Effective Partnerships Manual

Scaling Up Effective Partnerships: A Guide to Working with Faith-based Organizations in the Response to HIV and AIDS provides background information and case studies, dispels myths, and gives practical guidance. *Religions for Peace* is a co-sponsor of the manual along with Church World Service, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Norwegian Church Aid, and UNAIDS.



Millennium Development Goal Training Guide

Religions for Peace partnered with the United Nations Millennium Campaign to produce a training guide to complement the toolkit that was created to help religious communities become front-line actors in the initiative to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The guide is available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. The Spanish-language toolkit was produced in partnership with Lutheran World Relief. The toolkit is also available in English, French, and Arabic.

Global Youth Network Video

Religions for Peace-Japan produced a 16-minute video presentation about the *Religions for Peace* Global Youth Network. The film features the work of youth of different faiths from four regions of the world, working together to build peace.

2007 AUDITED FINANCIALS

To better advance its Strategic Plan, *Religions for Peace* implemented a new financial management system in 2007 as part of operational improvements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

December 31, 2007 (with comparative totals at December 31, 2006)	2007	2006
ASSETS		
Cash (including \$218,526 and \$1,243,689 in interest bearing accounts in 2007 and 2006)	\$ 263,251	\$ 1,270,580
Investments	2,241,483	2,004,049
Pledges receivable	1,405,416	416,199
Other receivables	54,384	18,137
Security deposits	27,150	27,150
Prepaid expenses	9,532	7,129
Furniture and equipment - at cost (net of accumulated depreciation of \$366,365 and \$352,327 in 2007 and 2006)	20,709	24,331
Leasehold improvements - at cost (net of accumulated amortization of \$54,925 and \$50,725 in 2007 and 2006)	1,584	5,784
Total assets	\$ 4,023,509	\$ 3,773,359
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	\$ 110,140	\$147,676
Line of credit		912,984
Total liabilities	110,140	1,060,660
Net assets		
Temporarily restricted	2,996,627	2,849,593
Unrestricted	916,742	(136,894)
Total net assets	3,913,369	2,712,699
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 4,023,509	\$ 3,773,359

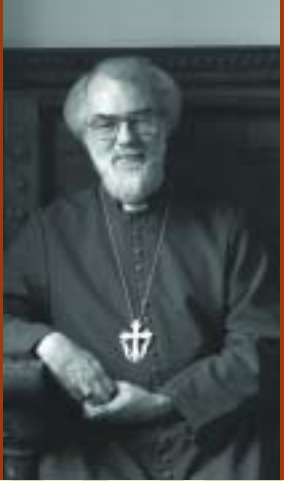
See independent auditor's report. The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the year ended December 31, 2007 (with comparative totals for year ended December 31, 2006)	2007			2006
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Total
REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT				
Grants	\$ 642,994	\$ 1,917,062	\$ 2,560,056	\$ 3,178,452
Contributions	1,839,293	8,576	1,847,869	1,850,766
Interest/dividends	11,142	92,968	104,110	79,201
Miscellaneous				155
Net gain (loss) - investments		(14,265)	(14,265)	40,251
Net assets released from restrictions	1,857,307	(1,857,307)		-
Total revenues, gains and other Support	4,350,736	147,034	4,503,770	5,148,825¹
EXPENSES				
Program services				1,489,839
Assembly				
Equipping IRC:				
West Africa	78,743		78,743	
Great Lake	124,593		124,593	
HACI	147,657		147,657	
Children and AIDS in Africa	188,396		188,396	
ROADS	13,780		13,780	
Health Policy Initiative	128,272		128,272	
Interreligious Council Building	739,218		739,218	223,768
Women	230,693		230,693	293,412
Youth/child	128,236		128,236	656,538
Conflict Transformation	89,523		89,523	642,723
Peace Building	34,354		34,354	
Sustainable Development	23,052		23,052	
Secretary General	501,457		501,457	283,717
Communications/other	120,820		120,820	42,277
Total program services	2,548,794		2,548,794	3,632,274
Supporting services				
Administration and general	437,058		437,058	575,573
Fund raising	311,248		311,248	425,236
Total supporting services	748,306		748,306	1,000,809
Total expenses	3,297,100		3,297,100	4,633,083¹
Change in net assets	1,053,636	147,034	1,200,670	515,742
Net assets - beginning of year	(136,894)	2,849,593	2,712,699	2,196,957
Net assets - end of year	\$ 916,742	\$ 2,996,627	\$ 3,913,369	\$ 2,712,699

See independent auditor's report. The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

¹ Including World Assembly income and expenses.



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