PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD’S RELIGIONS: "INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AS A REVELATORY EXPERIENCE."
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, 2009

HEARING EACH OTHER, HEALING THE EARTH

KAVA SCHAFER, M.Div., MA
WHEN YOU ENTER INTO AN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, DO NOT THINK BEFOREHAND WHAT YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE. WHEN YOU WITNESS TO YOUR FAITH, DO NOT DEFEND YOURSELF OR YOUR VESTED INTERESTS, SACRED AS THEY MAY APPEAR TO YOU. BEHAVE LIKE THE BIRDS IN THE SKIES; THEY SING AND FLY AND DEFEND NEITHER THEIR MUSIC NOR THEIR BEAUTY. WHEN YOU DIALOGUE WITH SOMEBODY, LOOK UPON YOUR PARTNER AS A REVELATORY EXPERIENCE, AS YOU WOULD AND SHOULD REGARD THE LILIES IN THE FIELDS.

RAIMON PANIKKAR
1893

FIRST PARLIAMENT OF WORLD’S RELIGIONS

CHICAGO WAS THE SITE OF THE WORLD COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION TO COMMEMORATE THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF “COLUMBUS’ DISCOVERY OF AMERICA”

EXPOSITION WAS DESIGNED AS A SHOWCASE FOR MODERNITY IN THE SCIENCES, ECONOMICS, AND INDUSTRY.

CHARLES CARROLL BONNEY HAD A VISION OF A CONGRESS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WORLD’S GREAT RELIGIONS
WHAT IS A PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS?

REPRESENTATIVES STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH EQUAL RIGHTS AND MUTUAL RESPECT.

REPRESENTATIVES COME FROM ‘GRASS ROOTS’, NOT HIERARCHICAL.
FROM THE BEGINNING, THE PARLIAMENT DID NOT HAVE THE CHARACTER OF AN INSTITUTION, BUT OF A MOVEMENT. (DYNAMISM)

EACH PERSON REPRESENTS A VIEWPOINT THAT IS UNIQUE, IRREPLACEABLE.
EAST MEETS WEST
1893

SWAMI VIVEKENANDA

“A SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE NATIONS THROUGH THE RELIGIONS.”
1993 CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF PARLIAMENT OF WORLD’S RELIGIONS

CHICAGO

8000 IN ATTENDANCE

DRAFTING AND ACCEPTANCE OF DECLARATION OF TOWARD A GLOBAL ETHIC
1999 PARLIAMENT
CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

7000 IN ATTENDANCE
75 NATIONS
EMPHASIS ON AIDS, AFRICA, AND END OF APARTHEID.

A CALL TO OUR GUIDING INSTITUTIONS
2004 PARLIAMENT OF WORLD’S RELIGIONS BARCELONA

8000 IN ATTENDANCE

EMPHASIS ON PATHWAYS TO PEACE: THE WISDOM OF LISTENING, THE POWER OF COMMITMENT
2009 PARLIAMENT, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

HEARING EACH OTHER, HEALING THE EARTH
MAJOR SUB-THEMES OF 2009 PARLIAMENT

HEALING THE EARTH WITH CARE AND CONCERN

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

OVERCOMING POVERTY IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD

SECURING FOOD AND WATER FOR ALL PEOPLE

BUILDING PEACE IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

CREATING SOCIAL COHESION IN VILLAGE AND CITY

SHARING WISDOM IN THE SEARCH FOR INNER PEACE
DAILY SCHEDULE

RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES

INTRARELIGIOUS SESSIONS

INTERRELIGIOUS SESSIONS

ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

OPEN SPACE

EVENING PLENARY
I have always believed in the principle of religious tolerance. But I have gone even further. I have advanced from tolerance to equal respect for all religions.
M.K. GANDHI

If we are to respect others’ religions as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world’s religions is a sacred duty.
1993 DECLARATION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD’S RELIGIONS

TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHIC
TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHIC

COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE AND RESPECT FOR LIFE

COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF SOLIDARITY AND A JUST ECONOMIC ORDER.

COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF TOLERANCE AND A LIFE OF TRUTHFULNESS

COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

A TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS
WHO IS THE OTHER?
THE GOLDEN RULE

CHRISTIANITY

DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU.

LUKE 6:31
THE GOLDEN RULE
JUDAISM

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.

LEVITICUS 19:18

539-334 BCE
THE GOLDEN RULE
CONFUCIUS

DO NOT DO TO OTHERS WHAT YOU WOULD NOT WANT THEM TO DO TO YOU.

ANALECTS 15.23

(C.551-489 BCE)
ONE SHOULD NOT BEHAVE TOWARDS OTHERS IN A WAY WHICH IS UNPLEASANT FOR ONESELF: THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF MORALITY.

THE MAHABHARATA X111 114, 8

(LATE VEDIC ca. 8TH CENTURY BCE-4TH CENTURY CE)
A STATE WHICH IS NOT PLEASANT OR ENJOYABLE FOR ME WILL ALSO NOT BE FOR HIM; AND HOW CAN I IMPOSE ON ANOTHER A STATE WHICH IS NOT PLEASANT OR ENJOYABLE FOR ME?

SAMYUTTA NIKAYA V,
353.35-342.2

ca. 563BCE - 483BCE
HUMAN BEINGS SHOULD BE INDIFFERENT TO WORLDLY THINGS AND TREAT ALL CREATURES IN THE WORLD AS THEY WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED.

SUTRAKRITANGA I, 11, 33

6TH CENTURY BCE
THE GOLDEN RULE
SIKHISM

DON’T CREATE HATRED WITH ANYONE AS GOD IS WITHIN EVERYONE.

SIRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB

1469-1538 CE
I AM GOOD TO THE MAN WHO IS GOOD TO ME:
LIKEWISE, I AM GOOD TO THE BAD MAN.

TAO TE CHING

3RD OR 4TH CENTURY BCE
THE GOLDEN RULE

ISLAM

NO ONE OF YOU IS A BELIEVER UNTIL YOU DESIRE FOR ANOTHER THAT WHICH YOU DESIRE FOR YOURSELF.

MUHAMMED, THE SUNNAH
(FROM THE HADITH)

570 CE-632
THE CHARTER OF COMPASSION

KAREN ARMSTRONG

2008 WINNER OF $100,000 TED PRIZE

MULTI-FAITH, MULTI-NATIONAL GOLDEN RULE INITIATIVE
A MODEL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE:

LISTENING WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL
OUR PROCESS:

GLOBAL TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALLS WITH STRANGERS

NO VISUAL CLUES

NO FAMILIARITY WITH EACH OTHER

OUR ASSUMPTIONS OF THE “OTHER”
IMPOVERISHMENT OF LANGUAGE
ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE SAME THINGS?
HUMILITY
CONTEMPLATIVE VISION
IMAGE COLLABORATION
LISTENING POST
INTERACTIVE SESSION
LISTENING WITH A GRATEFUL HEART PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOP
WE HAD TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

IS THIS THE HEART OF RELIGION?
“THERE ARE AS MANY PATHS TO GOD AS THERE ARE PEOPLE...

I HAVE GIVEN EACH BEING A SEPARATE AND UNIQUE WAY OF SEEING AND KNOWING AND SAYING THAT KNOWLEDGE.”

Rumi
BEAUTY IN DIFFERENCE

THERE IS NO WAY OF TELLING PEOPLE THAT THEY ARE ALL WALKING AROUND SHINING LIKE THE SUN.

THOMAS MERTON
LINKS

www.parliamentofofreligions.org
www.charterforcompassion.org
www.engagedpluralism.org
www.worldfaiths.org