



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 23<sup>rd</sup> mid-afternoon to  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> 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

### **Ms Helen Moran**

Indigenous Co-Chair, National Sorry Day Committee  
AUSTRALIA

### **Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne**

Executive Director, Sarvodaya Sharmadana Movement  
SRI LANKA

### **Venerable Dr. Yifa**

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

### **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

### **Prof. Madhu Kishwar**

Editor, Manushi  
INDIA

### **Alifatud Darojati Kusumaningtyas**

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

### **Peta Jones Pellach**

Director of Adult Education, The Shalom Institute  
University of NSW, Sydney  
AUSTRALIA

### **Prof. Ron Epstein**

Institute for World Religions, Berkeley, California  
UNITED STATES

### **Zainah Anwar [TBC]**

Executive Director, Sisters in Islam  
MALAYSIA

### **Gyung-Lan Jung**

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

### **Beatriz Colmo**

MINDANAWON  
PHILIPPINES

### **Rev. Elenie Poulos**

National Director, Uniting Justice  
AUSTRALIA

### **Rev. Susan Emeleus**

NSW 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 Tiominar**, 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" (**Narayan Gopalkrishnan**, Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, Australia)

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

"Supporting Women's Interfaith Initiatives through Creative Media" (**Sharon Bhagwan Rolls & Eta Ruth**, femLINKPACIFIC, Fiji)

"Initiatives and Experiences in Women's Interfaith Training Programmes" (**Sr Cecilia Ido**, Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College, Philippines)

"The Trafficking of Women – Modern Day Slavery: Building Faith-based Networks to Combat it." (**Sr. Pauline Coll**, sgs, 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)

"The negative effects of religious extremism on interfaith harmony and how to combat it?" (**Janette Hashimi**, Sunshine Coast Interfaith Network, Australia)

"Women and Fundamentalism in Islam and Catholicism" (**Trish Madigan**, Dominican Sisters, Australia)

"The Peacemongers. a workshop of creative singing and movement to unleash 'the moral imagination' (Lederach)" (**Ann Morgan**, Edmund Rice Education, Australia)

"Christian-Muslim Relations among Women" (**Suporna Rozario**, Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, Australia)

"The Women of Faith Network of the World Conference of Religions for Peace" (**Sr. Patricia Blundell**, Griffith University Chaplaincy, Australia)

## 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 Western Sydney  
Centre for Public Culture & Ideas, Griffith University  
Centre for the Study of Contemporary Islam, University of Melbourne  
Chung Tian Buddhist Temple  
Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations  
Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, Gold Coast  
Edmund Rice Education  
Executive Council of Australian Jewry  
Fiji Senior Citizens Association of Queensland  
Interfaith Multicultural Forum, Brisbane  
Interfaith Search Fiji  
International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Thailand  
Queensland Churches Together  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Queensland Regional Meeting  
Sarvodaya Sharmadana Movement, Sri Lanka  
Sisters In Islam, Malaysia  
Social Action Office, Catholic Religious Australia, Queensland  
Sunshine Coast Interfaith Network  
Wellington Inter-Faith Council, New Zealand  
Women Making Peace, South Korea  
World Council of Muslims for Interfaith Relations, Australasia

### 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.

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

**The registration fee covers all meals (except breakfast) and refreshments, including the main conference dinner, and a conference kit. For more details email [v.cawagas@griffith.edu.au](mailto:v.cawagas@griffith.edu.au)**