



INTERFAITH PROTOCOL FOR PEACE

Preamble

While there is much that is good and beautiful in the world today, there remains much bitter partisanship, contention and violence. “People everywhere are [troubled] by the brokenness of the human community along religious, economic, and political lines and feel a profound yearning for the unity of the human race” and for more meaning and inner peace. (J. Kitagawa) But just yearning for a more peaceful and meaning-filled world won’t make it happen no matter how hard we yearn. If we want it, we have to build it.

**YOU MAY NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR WORLD PEACE,
BUT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR PIECE/PEACE.
(i.e. your piece of world peace and your own inner peace.)**

Recitals

1. Every government and every society is organized around some set of principles.
2. The same is true regarding establishment of a culture of peace. Foundational principles are vital.
3. To be effective, such principles must effectively address the root causes of violence and be widely accepted and willingly followed. In short, they must be full of goodness and ring true.
4. The easiest and most powerful place to start in defining foundational principles for a global culture of peace is the moral/ethical teachings addressing root causes of violence that are already shared in common by the world’s great religions - and by many good people that do not follow any particular faith or any faith at all.
5. In our troubled world, those shared truths can be:
 - A reality check for each of us in our quest for inner peace and in fulfilling our responsibility for our piece of world peace,
 - An anchor to the soul,
 - The social glue that binds us together,
 - Foundational principles for a global morality and culture of peace, and
 - A unifying standard we can rally around to build the world we seek.

Foundational Principles

We suggest ten shared truths that are particularly powerful in directly countering the root causes of discord and violence and building inner and global peace. All are interrelated. See if they ring true to you.

Article 1 **Harmony Within**

***“Never let it be forgotten that ultimately peace lies not in the hands of governments
but in the hands of the people.”***

King Hussein of Jordan

Shared Truth 1. You are responsible for how you live your life: Take responsibility now. You will eventually reap what you sow whether that be by the effect of your choices on the quality of your own life, by the court of your own conscience, by the exacting standards of karma or by accounting to God. Take responsibility now.

Shared Truth 2. Have integrity: Be true to the best that is in you. You have the power to make the world a better place or a worse place. Exercise that power in positive ways. Make the world better for yourself and those around you. Challenge yourself. You can be better than you are and do more than you have ever imagined. Release the power of goodness within. Grow. Contribute. Be true to the best that is in you.

Shared Truth 3. To find more meaning and purpose in your life, overcome selfishness and greed and live for something higher than self. There is power and deep satisfaction in looking beyond selfish interests, caring about others, and working together for the common good.

Article 2 **Harmony with Others**

“There is an invisible bond of humanity that makes us all one.”

Thomas Carlyle

Shared Truth 4. All of humanity are interconnected as sisters and brothers in the same family, as all having divinity within, and/or as children of God and should be regarded as such. “All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1.*) It is said “there is no peace without justice” but brotherhood/sisterhood is the foundation on which both justice and peace are built – the fountain from which justice flows.

Shared Truth 5. Treat people as you would like to be treated – even with kindness and love - and not as you would not like to be treated. (The “Golden Rule”.) There are good people all over the world and they are more alike than they are different. If people would just accept that fact, refrain from the arrogance and self-deception of vilifying and belittling the other, and live the Golden Rule, peace would surely prevail.

Shared Truth 6. Parents have the responsibility to love, nurture, protect, and teach their children. Families are building blocks of society. A global culture of peace begins in the heart and in the home. Make your home a peaceful haven and refuge – a fountain from which love and peace flow. Work to insure principles of peace are taught in the schools, etc. Parental responsibility extends beyond the home.

Article 3

Harmony with the Source of Light/Enlightenment

*“Somehow the world is hungry for goodness and recognizes it when it sees it.
There’s something in all of us that hungers after the good and the true.”*

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Shared Truth 7. **There is nothing more important in life and nothing more fulfilling than living in harmony with the source of wisdom, love and light/enlightenment.** The vast majority of the world’s population believe that source is God. Whether it is understood to be God (by a variety of names and descriptions), natural law, the ultimate source of enlightenment, a deep sense of humanity, or something else, it embodies a fullness of wisdom and of all that is good, praiseworthy, and enduring. There is remarkable similarity between the faiths regarding the ethical standards and qualities that are part of that fullness. Coming into harmony with the source of wisdom, love, and light involves emulation of those qualities in one’s own life and results in a state of enlightenment, fulfillment, peace and love that encompasses all people and all creation.

Shared Truth 8. **Your thoughts, words, and actions move you either closer to harmony with the source of wisdom, love, and light or further away: Focus on moving closer.** Hatred, contention, and violence do not lead to harmony with the source of wisdom, love, and light (and peace) but naturally move you farther away. Do not stir up hatred, contention, and violence and do not follow leaders when they do. Religion should not be put in the hands of those who hate, but you do exactly that if you follow their dark and hateful ways. Focus on the Light. Constantly seek harmony with the source of light. Stand up for goodness, light, and peace. Always be moving closer.

Shared Truth 9. **Respect for freedom of belief is essential.** There must be no compulsion in matters of religion. If a person is forced to align with a religion, that religion is not their own and lacks the power to bring them into harmony with the source of light and to stir their soul to greatness. All want others to respect their right to believe. To protect that right for oneself, it is necessary to protect it for all. Moreover, respect for freedom of belief reduces violence in a society and increases stability, economic well-being, cultural richness, and peace.

Article 4

Harmony with Nature

*The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein.*

Psalm 24:1 KJV

Shared Truth 10. **The Earth is sacred and should be treated as such: Every person has a stewardship responsibility.** Not only does the Earth provide a place for each of us to live; air to breathe; and the possibility of food to sustain us, raiment to clothe us, and shelter to protect us; it is interconnected with the human spirit. Its beauties lift and inspire us. Its secrets intrigue and challenge us, provide us with incredible growth opportunities, and are the basis for most of our knowledge and all that flows from that knowledge. Its resources allow us to explore and express our creativity. It provides a platform for living with others and opportunities to learn about and practice the shared truths and a hundred other virtues that develop and expand the soul and lead to fullness of life and full flowering of the human spirit. Though we are often unaware, we are all dependent on the earth not only for survival but for every aspect of our lives.

Every person has a sacred responsibility to others, to the young and rising generations, to the Earth and all of nature, and to God to protect and care for the Earth and not be wasteful of its resources, but rather to use them with prudence and gratitude. No matter what political/economic system we live in, we should honor that sacred responsibility and work toward standards and practices regarding the allocation and utilization of earths' resources that are also consistent with the shared truths listed herein, including (i) individual responsibility, (ii) opportunities for growth and development, (iii) overcoming selfishness and greed, (iv) respecting others as sisters and brothers and treating them as we would like to be treated, etc. Consistent with those principles all people should have access to resources sufficient for them to provide for themselves and their families. All should have opportunities for full development of the human spirit. Government and business leaders and others in positions to influence or control distribution of Earths' resources have a sacred trust to be prudent and wise and to act with integrity, fidelity, and in a sustainable manner consistent with the principles herein.

Article 5 **Your Piece of Peace**

Peace is not a spectator sport. It requires the efforts of all.
Charles Keller – Past President of Rotary International

We can't just sit back and expect to have peace in our own lives, our families, communities, or the world. If we want it, we have to build it. But every time one of us lives a shared truth, we move closer.

One of the best paths to peace is to increase awareness of the shared truths and commitment to living them. There is likely no better way to build peace than to live more in harmony with the Source of Light/Enlightenment and encourage others to do the same in the best way they know or can find.

Do your part. Try each day to live the shared truths more completely. Make others aware. Encourage them to do their part. Be true to the best that is in you and to whatever divine light you have received. We'll do the same. Together, as a growing global brotherhood/sisterhood of people of goodwill, we'll build the world we all yearn to see.

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Endorsed and submitted respectfully and with prayers for blessings, love, and peace for all of humanity,

Board of Directors, Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable

Note of Clarification: While this Initiative focuses on good that is shared in common, it is not an attempt to make all religions one. Nor is it an attempt to suggest that "all roads lead to the Divine." It recognizes differences and the fact that many of those differences are important to those who follow the various faith traditions and may hold the keys to complete harmony with the source of wisdom, love, and light. However, living the Shared Truths will bring people more in harmony with each other and closer to harmony with that source no matter what religion they may align with. Moreover, it is likely the best path to sustainable peace.