



Many Paths

the monthly journal of

CRES — multi-faith community resource for exploring spirituality
through civic involvement, teaching, consulting, and writing

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- 9-12 REFERENCE SUPPLEMENT *The Gifts of Pluralism*

November Holy Days

- 4 **Bahá'í** *Qudrat* (power)—13th month of the year.
- 5 **Buddhism** *Kathina* — Monks and nuns in the Theravada tradition are given new robes.
- 5 **Jainism** *Lokasha Jayanti*—The full moon of the month is a time to celebrate the births of revered and scholarly persons.
- 5 **Sikhism** *Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji*—Guru Nanak, founder of the faith and first of the Ten Gurus, was born in 1469 CE. 974 of his hymns are in the Sikh scriptures.
- 12 **Bahá'í** *Anniversary birth of Bahá'u'lláh*—Bahá'í's suspend work this day.
- 15 **Christianity** *First of Advent (Eastern-New Calendar)*—Preparation period for Christmas.
- 23 **Bahá'í** *Qawl* (Speech)—The 14th month of the year.
- 24 **Sikhism** *Martyrdom Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji*—He was the 9th Guru, remembered for his defense of the Sikh faith but also Hinduism and religious liberty.
- 26 **Bahá'í** *Day of the Covenant*—Celebrates the anniversary of the appointment of 'Abdul-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, as the Center of the Covenant.
- 28 **Christianity** *First of Advent (Eastern – Old Calendar)*—The preparation for Christmas
- 28 **Bahá'í** *Ascension of 'Abdul-Bahá*— Commemorates his death.

Question Box

*Are there updates to the list of
Kansas City area interfaith opportunities?*

Sure. Look inside for our insert supplement.
And we continually revised the web site listing.

Our Page 1 essays introduce readers to aspects of specific faiths, compare and contrast how various faiths consider particular subjects, or present material those of any spiritual path may find helpful.

Three Stem Cell Questions

You cannot understand religion if you exclude the valorization of life and passion for healing. Think about • the many hospitals were founded by churches, • the ministry of Jesus with the sick, • the medicine Buddha, • the Navajo medicine man, or • the cure which is the Qur'an itself in Islam. One way or another, the central concern of faith is *salvation*, and the very term in English is derived from the Latin roots related to "health."



Jesus the healer

Here are three religious questions in the discussion about the sanctity of life and early stem cell research for therapies and cures.

1. **When does life begin?**
2. **What is the promise of such research for pastoral care?**
3. **How can Americans can respect every faith's opinions on this issue?**

The first question arises from concern over killing helpless human beings. Every faith proscribes murder. It is true that this research works with human cells — a skin cell or an ovum. Are these human cells human persons? To use theological language, when does a fertilized egg become a human soul?

No scientist can tell you, and theologians disagree. No biological test is possible to resolve this issue of faith.

► One view is that "ensoulment" occurs at the moment of fertilization with the fusion of sperm and egg.

► Others say ensoulment could not happen until after the possibility of twinning has passed, 14 days after conception; otherwise, the soul could be split in two or one of the twins would get the soul and other would have no soul.

► Others say it is when implantation in the womb occurs.

► St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, said hominization occurred at quickening — thought to be about 40 days after conception. This was the common Catholic view until 1859 when Pope Pius IX decreed that life begins at "conception."

► Dante thought it was when the brain structures are developed.

► Common law and most traditions afford rights and recognize personhood at birth.

In *Roe v Wade*, the Supreme Court did not answer the theological question, but took a practical approach. It said that the state's interest in pregnancy increases after the first trimester. It established viability as the point at which the state may restrict or proscribe abortion. English and US common law recognizes personhood at birth, and most parents name and register their children after born.

Stem cell research does not involve abortion. But if you believe that a fertilized egg is a person, you may object to research using IVF cells. One may then be required to balance (a) the good from the current practice of legally disposing about a thousand of these cells every day from *in-vitro* fertility clinics as medical waste with (b) research for curing what everyone would agree are actual persons. In a fire, your priority may be to rescue the one 5-year old remaining in the building over any number of undifferentiated cells in petri dishes. The other form of research,



Navajo Medicine Man

SCNT (somatic cell nuclear transfer) does not use fertilized eggs. Without genetic material from both a father and a mother, this method may seem to present no parallel theological problem. The nucleus of a patient's cell replaces the nucleus of a donor's egg, which provides the environment for growth so that, it is hoped, harvested stem cells can be coaxed to grow into specific tissue or organ cells — for example, pancreatic tissues to produce insulin.

However, those who think SCNT creates a new person through cloning find the procedure illicit. The consistent ethic of the “seamless garment” of respect for life would be violated.

A related objection to this research is the “slippery slope” argument. It says that investigating the very processes of life in this research is the first step in blaspheming God's created order toward the manufacture of Frankenstein monsters, or to justifying questionable means for beneficial ends. But similar objections have been raised to the study of cadavers, the use of antibiotics, vaccines, and organ transplants. The result has been cures, not monsters. The proposed amendment increases the level of protection against misuse of medical technology and adds careful checks and balances to the research process. Strict ethical limits are imposed. For example, while there currently is no law prohibiting cloning a human being, the amendment would make even the attempt to clone a person illegal.

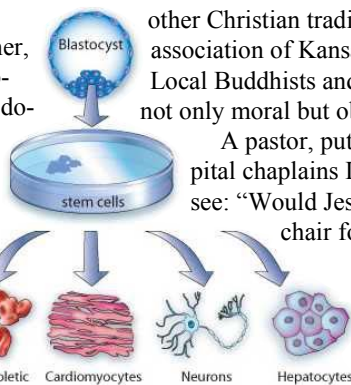
Other concerns involve medical risks to egg donors and a financial market for eggs. Egg extraction has been done safely for decades and the amendment prohibits the sale of eggs for research.

The issue before the voters is much simpler than these and other theological issues. We are not voting on when life begins. We are voting whether responsible researchers will be protected from those who would make them criminals, along with doctors who would prescribe resulting cures to their patients, and even jail the patients accepting such cures. We are voting on whether research and cures legal and available in other states will remain available to Missourians.

The greatest spiritual surprise for me in this debate is the difficulty in recognizing the filters we use in discerning and telling the truth about what the current status is, what the proposed amendment says, or what the research reveals. Anti-abortion rights groups oppose the amendment in part because its passage would complicate their efforts to codify in law one religious perspective about when life begins.

The second question is, “What is the promise of such research?” This is an urgent religious question because, as I mentioned, healing is a central concern for people of faith. The possible cures for Parkinson's, cancer, heart disease, sickle cell, ALS, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, spinal chord injuries, diabetes, and many other conditions inspire religious attention and support.

It is not surprising that this Missouri issue is being discussed widely and intensely in religious circles. Episcopal priest and former Senator Jack Danforth, an opponent of abortion, enthusiastically endorses stem cell research because of its potential for healing actual human beings. Joining him are Methodist minister, former mayor and now Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, and clergy of many



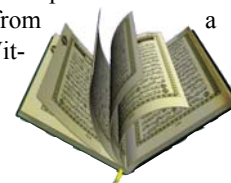
A complete egg develops into a microscopic blastocyst of undifferentiated cells. These stem cells are then coaxed to become specific kinds of cells for therapies and cures.

other Christian traditions. The Jewish leadership, the rabbinical association of Kansas City, unanimously supports the proposal. Local Buddhists and Muslim leaders feel pursuing such cures is not only moral but obligatory. “Heal the sick,” says the Bible.

A pastor, put it to me this way, as could many of the hospital chaplains I know, concerned with the suffering they see: “Would Jesus condemn an accident victim to a wheelchair forever if a cure were available?”

The third question is, “How can people of diverse faiths resolve their differences in a religiously pluralistic society?” How do we resolve the claims of those who believe it is a religious obligation to pursue cures through this research with the religious conviction that such research is immoral?

An answer arises from the respect we offer each religion to set standards for its own members but not use the force of law to impose them on the rest of us. For example, the Catholic Church prohibits contraception, but others are free to follow our conscience. We do not allow Orthodox Jews to keep others from eating pork, or Muslims to make others abstain from a glass of wine with dinner, or the Jehovah's Witnesses to prevent others from having blood transfusions. We distinguish sectarian views about morality from legal requirements that bind us all.



The Cure that is the Qur'an
"For every illness there is a cure . . . go find it!"

Honoring the faith of every American is critical to our practice of freedom of religion. Both those who object to this research for cures and those who embrace it deserve praise for thoughtful and honest debate. I have consulted with sincere folks on both sides in preparing this essay. Each person should be at liberty to practice one's faith without governmental interference. Those whose faith compels them to fulfill the healing models of their traditions should not be restrained by others whose faith rightly governs their own lives but should not be imposed on others. No person should be forced to accept a cure obtained through techniques objectionable by one's faith, but no person should be deprived of them because someone else's faith cannot accept them. A YES vote protects the free exercise of religion for everyone. A NO vote prohibits those whose faith obliges them to work for cures through scientific advances. The proposed amendment assures Missourians that no sectarian theology may be imposed to prohibit research for cures available in other states.

While those of various faiths may differ in how to achieve medical advances, the message of healing found within the sundry traditions charge us as spiritual beings to care for one another as a sacred duty.

—VB

A slightly expanded version of this essay appears at www.cres.org/2 and the text of the proposed amendment is available at www.cres.org/2.pdf

On the Path

Among key interfaith events this month are the 22d annual CRES Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Family Ritual Meal and the 2d annual Table of Faiths luncheon. Please see page 7 for details.

As you consider your Thanksgiving and year-end charities, please remember that CRES requires your financial support to continue serving the community and the nation.



Vern Barnett



Panel on Stem Cell Cures

UMKC student Jeff McCaffrey, spinal chord injury victim, arranged a discussion of the Missouri Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative (Amendment 2) at Pierson Auditorium Oct 21, sponsored by the

UMKC Student Society for Stem Cell Research. The panel was moderated by (left) Luke Henry, the UMKC student group's officer and medical school student. Coalition representative Sandra Aust discussed the initiative as a public policy matter. Dr Maureen Dudgeon, KC Bioscience associate dean, spoke from a physician viewpoint. Vern presented a religious analysis. Coalition representative. Jeff spoke from a patient perspective. The audience was extraordinarily attentive and asked penetrating questions which the panelists applauded for their importance.

Listening Well



Laura Janusik, Ph.D, McGee Chair of Communication, Rockhurst University, and Board Member of the International Listening Association (ILA), asked for CRES participation at the Oct 19-22 International Listening Conference with the theme, "Measuring the Effects of Listening on Learning, Earning, and Healing."

CRES associate minister, convener of the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council, and president of The Human Agenda, the Rev David E Nelson, DMn (left) was joined by CRES friend Josef Walker of HarmonyNCCJ and Julie Lynch of Minnesota and Maria Roca of Florida who were the four Religion and Spirituality "context" leaders.

Other "context" groups were Business, Education, Healthcare, and Theory and Research.

About 90 people from four countries attended.

David reports the conference was "an exciting venture."



Neale Donald Walsch

Thanks to CRES friend Jamie Rich, director of OpenCircle and its spiritual cinema program, Vern was invited to interview *Conversations with God* author Neal Donald Walsch (left) and



filmmaker Stephen Simon (right) who brought the remarkable story of Walsch's journey from eating out of trash bins to world-wide fame to the screen. The movie opened Oct 27 and is the first produced expressly for Spiritual Cinema Circle. Visit www.SpiritualCinemaCircle.com.



Same-Sex Love and World Faiths

Blue River Community College President Malcolm Wilson greeted Vern after Vern's lecture Oct 5 on "Same Sex Relationships in World Religions." Vern was invited to address this topic as part of the school's diversity program. He had previously presented an overview of world religions there. Librarian Kay Sodowsky made the arrangements.

Kriya Yoga Centenary Observance

Paramahansa Prajnanananda, international Kriya Yoga leader and Vern visit here after an Oct 29 program at the Olathe Ball Conference Center observing the 100th anniversary of the birth of Swamiji's predecessor, Paramahansa Hariharananda. Also speaking were Marla J Selvidge, author and director of the Center for Religious Studies at the University of Central Missouri, and Arvind Khetia, a Kansas City Vedanta expert. Raja Govindarajan, one of our 2002 9/11 musicians, and



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friends sang, and a wonderful dinner of Indian food followed. Here is an excerpt of Vern's remarks:

It is true that every religion presents a particularly inflected insight into the Ultimate. The American Indian tribes explored a special intimacy with nature. The Abrahamic traditions have detailed the rules by which the social order can be aligned with a power moving in history toward justice. But the spirituality of India is unparalleled in both the insights and the techniques of revealing the divine which animates, breathes through, each of us.

Breath is the essence of many faiths. In the Hebrew story of creation, God animates the first man by breathing into him. An Arabic word for breath connotes the wind that brings a flicker into full flame. The Greek word for air gives us the word atmosphere and is related to the Sanskrit Atman. *Prana* for breath with its wider meanings is paralleled in the Chinese *chi* and the Korean *ki*.

And in English, the words for breathing in and out, *inspiration* and *expiration*, contain the very word spirit. When we are inspired, we may catch our breath in such a way as to intimate that greater experience associated with *kriya yoga*.

But the West still has not absorbed the wisdom offered by teachers like Hariharananda. We have twisted the wisdom into narcissism, we have perverted the insights into narrow selfishness. Instead of full realization of divinity, we have constructed construct images of ourselves in particular social identities. Yoga has become merely a physical set of exercises rather than a spiritual path for realization of the divine self. . . .



Paramahansa Hariharananda



Acting on our commitment to engage and empower youth, The Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council and HarmonyNCCJ will collaborate to sponsor two special Interfaith Unitowns this winter. Interfaith Unitowns help high school students discover and appreciate the unique perspectives religions and ethnic traditions bring to our community. The programs will invite young people to explore their own spiritual roots while learning how to advocate respect for other beliefs. The weekends are also a critical component in our long range strategy to train adults from all religions in effective youth outreach techniques. The Interfaith Unitowns will follow HarmonyNCCJ's popular overnight format, adding a segment focused on religious pluralism. The Rev. Vern Barnet, DMn is consulting on the content.

Each Interfaith Unitown will run from Saturday evening through Sunday afternoon. The weekend of January 27 and 28 the program begins at 6:30 p.m. to accommodate our Jewish brothers and sisters. February 24 and 25 will begin at 5:00 PM. The cost to each student is \$35.00 (includes meals).

Encourage Participation
 Josef Walker is available to speak to youth groups and religious leadership to invite students and adults to participate.
 816-333-5059 // josef@kcharmony.org
 Visit us on the web at
www.kcharmony.org/Interfaith%20Unitown.htm



Congrats!

and best wishes to Nancy Jane Erikson and Paul Eugene Arneson, married by Vern in their

Plaza area home Oct 7 with friends from both coasts and north and south who enjoyed a three-day celebration.

Five Faiths



Muslim leader Mahnaz Shabbir stands by a huge "carved stone" after speaking at a retreat moderated by Vern at Unity Village for an international gathering of participants Oct 14-20.

"Common Ground — Celebrating Five Great Religions" included Alan Edelman speaking on the Jewish tradition, Buddhist Bhante Wimala (below), and Dave DeLuca on Hinduism from a Vedanta perspective. Vern presented Christianity. He also provided the overview and the opening and closing water rituals.

Dale Worley was the retreat musician.



The Poetry Path

Poems with spiritual significance

Sonnet: Maya's Workbench

Vern Barnet, 1942-

One re-evaluates, as one ages:
 the raging tornado and the sunny day;
 those things one does for free, those for wages;
 the secrets kept, the gladdened exposé;
 those moments so large they seemed eternal,
 the petty crises now lost in the void;
 the dying of the year, and the vernal,
 despair and gratitude, and love enjoyed.

Are these unstable pivots from One Source?
 or tenons mortised in a perfect joint?
 Does youth hinge age? Do graves latch life and force
 the food chain toward some cosmic point?
 This package, mitered from infinite scraps,
 is plumbed puzzle-snug without any gaps.

Comment

We are grateful to receive comments on our efforts to promote interfaith understanding. Because of space, we omit them this month — but please know your comments are welcome!



Evelyn Green Gorten, 82, of Kansas City, MO died Oct 18 at her home. Evelyn was an early and faithful supporter of interfaith work. She helped to begin our annual Thanksgiving Sunday Interfaith Ritual Meals with her cooking of the turkeys in the days before the event was catered. She was a member of the CRES delegation to the first North American Interfaith Network conference and at several other NAIN events. Among her survivors is CRES board member Allan Abrams.



Congratulations to the American Friends Service Committee's Harritt who received the first Wings of Peace Award from Cultural Crossroads (See this month's insert reference supplement) Oct 8. CRES associate minister and award nominee the Rev David E Nelson, DMin, traveling abroad, was honored in absentia.



With thanks to Susan Cook for helping to make it possible, Vern and long-time interfaith leader Peter L. Laurence, in town for a few days, renewed their friendship from the first NAIN conference in 1988 when they served on the planning committee. Peter is Co-Founder and Director of the "Education as Transformation Project" at Wellesley College. He has been a consultant to various national and international interfaith organizations for the past twenty years, has served as Chair of the Board of the North American Interfaith Network, and as a member of the Assembly for the Parliament of the World Religions.



Imam Bilal Muhammed, former JCRB/AJC director David Goldstein, and Lama Chuck Stanford pose for this interfaith photo (Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist) at the Oct 8 *iftar* (meal ending the day's fast during Ramadan) at the Leawood Community Center. We thank our Muslim friends for a wonderful evening of friendship.

Ed Chasteen on the Table of Faiths award
see page 6; some thoughts

“Too much sanity may be madness. And the greatest madness of all may be to see the world as it is and not as it should be.” So says Don Quixote as he sets off to right all the world's wrongs. His friends think he's crazy. They come to him and say, “Wickedness wears thick armor.” He responds, “And for that you would have me surrender? Nay, the enchanter may confuse the outcome ten thousand times. Still must a man arise and again do battle, for the effort is sublime.”

Early in his quest, Don Quixote comes upon an old house he thinks is a castle. Inside he meets a serving wench he thinks is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen. He falls to his knees. “My lady, what is your name?” “Off your knees, you fool. My name is Aldonza, and I'm no lady.” He protests, “No my lady, your name is not Aldonza. Your name is Dulcinea.”

She curses him and throws a dirty dishrag at him. He takes it as a token of her affection and leaves. Several times in the story, Man

continued next column

of LaMancha, he returns, each time calling her Dulcinea and treating her as a lady. The only one who does. Near the end of the story, she hears that he is dying and distant from her. She goes in search and finds him delirious. She takes his hand. “My lord,” she says. “Who is it?” He asks. “Why you know me,” she says. “You called me by name and changed my life.” “No, my lady, who is it?” And she says, “My name is . . . Dulcinea.”

She now sees herself the way he has seen her all along. That's the way HateBusters see the world. We know Aldonza is out there. But we will treat the world as Dulcinea until one of two things happens: either it becomes what we already know it to be. Or it does us in. We will not accept any other outcome.

Were I Shakespeare, I could not find the right words to express to the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council the depth of my gratitude for your encouraging words to me. You endorse my impossible dream of becoming a World Class Person, able to go anyplace at anytime and talk to anyone about anything and feel safe. You inspire me to see past morning headlines and nightly news. You help me hold on to my vision of life as it should be, where we are all World Class Persons and can go anyplace at anytime and talk to anyone about anything and feel safe.

Quotation

Live as though you know your life, all life, the world, is balanced on the very edge. One act, every act, tips us all into doom and destruction, into hope and life.

—Maimonides

Humor

The Sunday School teacher asked the little girl to draw a picture of the Hebrews' flight from Egypt. Her work of art depicted an airplane, all the passengers with halos except one person up front without one. When asked about it, she explained, “Oh, that's Pontius, the pilot.”

KC Star Column

Vern's Wednesday FYI “Faiths and Beliefs” columns included these recent topics:

- 1004 Dialogue can defuse a threat
- 1011 Transform the World Around You
- 1018 Sexuality has its place in spirituality
- 1025 Time for humanity to change paths?

For the full text, please visit <http://www.cres.org> (sometimes the printed version gives way to ad space) or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to CRES, Box 45414, Kansas City, MO 64171.

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2006 November



Please Join Us

GREATER KANSAS CITY INTERFAITH COUNCIL

and Honorary Chairs

Kay Barnes, Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri

Alvin Brooks, Mayor Pro Tem Kansas City, Missouri

Ben Craig, Board Chair Metcalf Bank

Peggy Dunn, Mayor of Leawood, Kansas

invite you to join us at the

2nd Annual

TABLE OF FAITHS CELEBRATION

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Westin Crown Center Hotel

1 East Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri

11:30 a.m. Faith Exhibits Open

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Program

1:30 p.m. Faith Exhibits Open

Honoring 2006 TABLE OF FAITHS

Award Recipients

Don & Adele Hall

Ed Chasteen



**Opening doors of
understanding by building
the most welcoming
community for people
of all faiths**

Information about the Council, originally a program of CRES, formerly found on page 7 of *Many Paths* is still available on the CRES web site, www.cres.org/office. The CRES website will be redesigned soon and a new address for this material will be announced.

06.09b

This page was prepared by the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council for *Many Paths*. Report corrections to www.kcinterfaith.org. The Council is planning its own newsletter soon — please watch www.kcinterfaith.org for information.

Village Presbyterian Church, 6641 Mission, Rm 126 Vern on "Four Faith Figures"

This survey of Muslim, Buddhist, Confucian, and Sikh figures presents their lives and insights for their times and ours. They are not dusty figures in history but speak to us today about the issues that perplex us.



Oct 29
Muhammad

Muhammad: Why he is loved. How do we align ourselves with a power moving in history toward justice? In the life of Muhammad is the discovery of a transcendent Power which makes society work.



Nov 5
The Buddha

The Buddha: The guy who woke up. Why is there suffering and what can be done about it? In the life of the Buddha there is compassion and the wisdom to free ourselves from the trance that keeps us from seeing reality as it is.



Nov 12
Confucius

Confucius: Say what? How can society be ordered for peace and prosperity? In the life of Confucius the argument between the Legalists and the Idealists found resolution.



Nov 19
Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak: An accountant's truth. Do the differences in religion really matter? In the life of the first Sikh Guru mysticism and mono-theism were joined.

816.268.1078, Westin Crown Center Hotel.
Nov 5 Sun 9:30a and 11a — *see left.*

Nov 5 Sun 6-9p — Crescent Peace Society annual Eid Dinner honoring Diane Hershberger, Gary Morsch, Hallmark Cards, Inc, Mary Sanchez, India Emporium and Dr Abdalla Idris Ali' 913-752-8019; Ritz Charles, 9000 W 137.

Nov 6 Mon 7p—Interfaith Book Club South Christian Science Center, 504 E. 112

Nov 8 Wed 7p— Interfaith Book Club North Mid-Continent Library, 6060 N. Chestnut

Nov 12 Sun 9:30a and 11a — *see left.*

Nov 12 Sun 3-4p— 17th Annual Harmony Choral Celebration



Concert; reception follows; free will offering. South-Broadland Presbyterian Church, 7850 Holmes Road.

Nov 13 Mon 6-7:30p Interfaith Council meets.

Nov 14 Tue 11:30-1:30 — Interfaith Council Table of Faiths luncheon,* *see page 6.*

Nov 16 Thu 5:30p— Bob Berkebile on Green Architecture, Linda Hall Library reading room.

Nov 19 Sun 9:30a and 11a — *see left.*

Nov 19 Sun 6-8p, **22nd annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Family Ritual Meal**,* Temple B'nai Jehudah, 12320 Nall; — *see next column for details; for reservations (\$20 adults, \$18 children), send check with names of your party to CRES, Box 45414, KCMO 64171. For questions, write staff@cres.org or call 913.649.5114.*

Looking Ahead

Dec 1 Fri 7:30a— Center for Spirit at Work Bkfst Club, Jane Chu, 816.268.1078 18 and under free. 816-561-9999

Dec 14 Thu 7:30p— "Creator of the Stars" www.ChamberMusic.org, tickets \$25.

Dec 20 Wed 7:30p— Vern on "The Logic of Reality: Nagarjuna's Void"*— Rime

Dec 31 Sun 5:30/6-7a Morning Peace Meditation, Rime Buddhist Center

22nd annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Family Ritual Meal



With brief greetings from American Indian, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian (Protestant and Roman Catholic), Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, and Zoroastrian community leaders, we share full thanksgiving feast, this year honoring **Gayle Krigel**. Gayle's work on the inaugural Table of Faiths luncheon, both Saalam Shalom dinners, and many other efforts has modeled interfaith commitment in our community.

The evening celebrates the American heritage, recognizes our shortcomings, and propels us to renewed commitment for interfaith understanding.

This Kansas City tradition demonstrates our commitment to expanding the American ideals to include the religious adventure of the entire human family.

The participation of children who ask why 11 kinds of food are upon the table emphasizes connecting the heritage of the past with our hopes for the future. "This full Thanksgiving meal includes foods symbolizing the American heritage," says David E Nelson who chairs the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council. "But while Pilgrims' deliverance from religious oppression can be celebrated, our proud heritage is stained by oppressing Native Americans, blacks, and others, and we must now place the American ideals of freedom and hope in the context of the religious adventure of the entire human family," he said.

Children ask questions, such as, "Why do we eat cranberry sauce?" and "Why do we have pie?" and adults answer from the script. The texts for this observance include William Bradford's History of the Plymouth Plantation. There are 81 short parts, including traditional Thanksgiving hymns.

The ceremony with the meal lasts about two hours. The meal is complete, with the traditional turkey, cranberry sauce, pie, and all the fixin's, and a vegetarian option.

Previous honorees have included (2005) former Kansas Attorney General Robert Stephan and former Catholic Chancellor George Noonan, (2004) Marc Wilson, Director and CEO of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and Laurence Sickman, his deceased predecessor, (2003) Congressman Dennis Moore, (2002) Kansas City Mayor Pro-Tem Al Brooks, (2001) Kansas City Star columnist and Presbyterian lay theologian Bill Tammeus, and Kansas City Star publisher Art Brisbane, (2000) Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes, and (1999) Hindu leader Anand Bhattacharyya and Muslim leader A Rauf Mir, MD.

Over the years, the ceremony has been hosted by the Grand Avenue Methodist Church, Rockhurst University, the Village (Presbyterian) Church, All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Saint James Lutheran Church, Unity Temple on the Plaza, Shawnee Presbyterian Church, Grace and Holy Trinity (Episcopal) Cathedral, Temple B'nai Jehudah, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Congregation Beth Shalom, the Community Christian Church, St Monica Catholic Church, and St Andrew Christian Church, and the Rime Buddhist Center.

Visit www.cres.org/blog

November

Nov 1 Wed 11a-12p — Difficulty Dialogues* Vern participates with moderator Bill Tammeus as panelists Christian (David Nelson, CRES associate minister), Jewish (Sheila Sonnenschein) and Muslim (Mahnaz Shabbir, CRES board member) discuss faith, belief, and culture, and how both connections and conflict can arise from them; Park University Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel; for lunch: Susan Walker, 816-584-6329.

Nov 3 Fri 7:30a — The Center for Spirit at Work Breakfast Club Fr Tom Curran, OSFS, newly installed President of Rockhurst University on "Holiness; Doing the Ordinary, Extraordinarily Well"; reservations@centerforspiritatwork.org.

*CRES sponsorship, consultation, or leadership



CRES

Greater Kansas City's multi-faith resource

Promoting understanding among all faiths through civic involvement, teaching, consultation, and writing

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06.11a

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Thank you for your support of interfaith understanding.
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- \$25,000 Saint
- \$50,000 Angel
- \$100,000 Minor Deity

22nd annual family Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Ritual Meal

Temple B'nai Jehudah, 12320 Nall
Nov 19 Sunday 6-8p

See page 7 for reservations now.



Many Paths

Tyler Endsley, editor; Vol 23 #11
Editorial address: Box 45414, KC MO 64171
World Faiths Center for Religious Experience and Study
mailing address: Box 4165
Overland Park, KS 66204

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VISION

CRES envisions metro Kansas City as a model community honoring interfaith relationships
▶ as a way of deepening one's own tradition and spirituality, and
▶ where the wisdom of the many faiths meaningfully addresses our
● environmental, ● personal, and ● social crises, and thus promotes healing, justice, and peace.

MISSION

To honor the sacred wherever it appears, to support its appearance everywhere — especially by promoting interfaith understanding in metro Kansas City and beyond

OUR GUIDING QUESTION

What is sacred?— what is so important that my life depends upon it, that I would die for it — and what may I do to understand, honor, and share it?

THE CRES MOTTO

- *Primal Faiths*: restored with nature
- *Asian Faiths*: the self made whole
- *Monotheistic Faiths*:
community in covenant
- *Liberation Movements*:
finding the sacred afresh

OUR VALUES

Mutuality. For CRES, mutuality means fully embracing both differences and similarities, both distinct traditions and universal kinship. We understand ourselves better by understanding others.
Exploration. For CRES, exploring one another's faiths leads neither to conversion nor syncretism, but rather to mutual purification and the deepening of our own traditions.
Service. CRES offers multi-faith resources and processes to the community for interfaith encounter and service to the secular world. We need each other's insights and aid to respond to the crises of secularism.

CRES WORKS TO

- promote interfaith dialog and cooperation
- provide insight into the problems and possibilities of global community
- support and enhance the efforts of existing KC area religious and educational organizations
- interpret religious dimensions of American and international culture
- enrich and refresh the life of the individual
- deepen awareness of our participation in the natural environment

FOUR REASONS FOR INTERFAITH WORK

- ▶ We are kin.
- ▶ We understand ourselves better by understanding others.
- ▶ Genuine interfaith encounter leads to mutual purification and the deepening of our own traditions.
- ▶ We need each other's insights to respond to the
● environmental, ● personal, and ● social crises of our age.

OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- The Kansas City Interfaith Council, 1989-2004 (CRES founded and hosted it as a program and in 2005 arranged its independence).
- The first interfaith conference in the region's history with 250 people from 14 faiths, A to Z — American Indian to Zoroastrian.
- Our monthly 12-page color journal, *Many Paths*.
- Our extensive web site, www.cres.org.
- Our annual Thanksgiving Sunday Interfaith Family Ritual Meal.
- MOSAIC Passport congregational visitation program.
- Sparking efforts like *The Hindu and the Cowboy and Other Kansas City Stories* and the Interfaith Book Club.
- Other programs, consultations, teaching, writing, networking, and resources requested by community groups.
- The services of a professional staff that includes Dr Vern Barnet, who writes *The Kansas City Star* "Faiths and Beliefs" column each Wednesday.

Board of Directors

Board Chair Joe Archias; President Vern Barnet; Secretary Jim Houx; Allan Abrams, Zohreh Behbehani, Rick Childs, Anton Jacobs, Mahnaz Shabbir, John Shelton, the Hon Robert T Stephan

Board of Advisors

The Hon David Adkins, Anne Canfield, Mary Cohen, Suzanne Dotson, Jane Heide, John Gregory, Larry Guillot, H M "Hub" Hubbard, Fred Krebs, Robert Minor, David Stallings, Kristy Stallings, Donna Ziegenhorn

KC Interfaith Opportunities

and a chart of world religions and the crises of secularism

Second Draft 2006 November: Please report errors and omissions to staff@cres.org

1. Information Sources — 2a. Inclusive Organizations — 2b. Interfaith Organizations — 3. Annual Interfaith Events

CRES may be the most connected interfaith effort in Kansas City, but it is not the only one. An increasing number of organizations bring interfaith awareness to their work, and some of them are deliberate in promoting interfaith opportunities or access. We hope this draft, the second of periodic compilations of organizations, will assist you in strengthening our community by building interfaith understanding. Please let us know about the groups we missed.

As the threat of theocracy increases, even as an individual, you can encourage America's tradition of pluralism by

- ▶ supporting these organizations,
- ▶ writing newspapers,
- ▶ phoning in on talk shows,
- ▶ arranging speaking engagements for your clubs —
- ▶ and specifically, working through CRES, you can



- write report on events for *Many Paths*
- represent CRES at meetings
- help to prepare *Many Paths* for mailing
- research (such as helping us to complete this list of interfaith organizations)
- volunteer to assist with CRES workshops, etc
- provide your special skills and talents, such as providing music for one of our programs, hosting a fund-raiser in your home to acquaint friends with CRES and *Many Paths*, assist with our web site, tape CRES appearances, etc.

This edition also charts the basic theory of religious pluralism which guides the work to preserve American freedoms against the narrowness of the theocratic threats and to respond with a sacred, not secular, sense to the crises in the environment, personhood, and society.

1. Information Sources

- ▶ *The Kansas City Star* (also on line)
- Helen Gray, faith editor
- Faith announcements, Saturday
- Bill Tammeus, Saturday faith columnist and daily blogger
- Vern Barnet, Wednesday free-lance columnist and occasional blogger
- Faith columnists from many traditions appear in rotation
- Regular news and features often include topics of diverse faiths

▶ *KC Muslim News Digest* (email)

▶ *The National Catholic Reporter* — This outstanding weekly (also on line) occasional reports interfaith stories and special profiles of non-Christian faiths.

▶ *KC Jewish Chronicle* (Fridays and on line) — This advocacy paper is essential reading to keep abreast of local Jewish news and organizations. Columnist Rabbi Margolies's column is always worth reading.

▶ *Camp* (monthly)

Vern writes the "Sacred Paths" column.

▶ *Many Paths* (CRES monthly journal, each issue with • an essay to guide understanding issues of pluralism, • calendars of • community events, • CRES programs, and • holidays, • comments, • humor, • quotations, • poetry, • reference resources in the supplementary insert, and • reports from the Interfaith Council.

▶ *KCPT Channel 19 Public Television*

Occasionally the Friday *KC Week in Review* with Nick Haines present local religious issues with reporters and clergy.

2a. Inclusive Organizations

This list does not include groups like the Greater Kansas City Coalition for Worker Justice, the Independence Ministerial Alliance, Raytown Community Inter-Faith Alliance, Wyandotte Interfaith Sponsoring Council, Project Equality, or More² which develop their membership and plan their programming to be religiously inclusive but may have economic, racial, collegial, civic, or other issues as their primary focus. They may be interfaith in the sense that they involve people from several traditions, but not in the sense that their focus is the sacred as revealed through different faiths.

- Surely institutions like
- ❖ the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
 - ❖ the International Relations Council,
 - ❖ the Center for Practical Bioethics,
 - ❖ the American Civil Liberties Union, and
 - ❖ the American Friends Service Committee
- are significant resources for interfaith understanding, as are schools which offer programs and instruction in world religions such as
- ❖ the Saint Paul School of Theology,
 - ❖ the Nazarene Theological Seminary,
 - ❖ Central Baptist Theological Seminary
 - ❖ Unity Institute
 - ❖ Ottawa University—KC
 - ❖ UMKC Center for Religious Studies
 - ❖ KU Department of Religious Studies
 - ❖ William Jewell College
 - ❖ Community of Christ Seminary
 - ❖ Park University
 - ❖ University of Kansas

Department of Religious Studies
(We cannot recommend Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as its approach to non-Christian faiths is unreliable and hostile.)

We also omit private groups open only by invitation, like the Interfaith Dinner group.

This list does include some organizations with specific programs or directions aimed at interfaith

understanding even if their main focus is broader.

We want to salute the impact of organizations which no longer exist as well, such as Ecumedia and the KC Interfaith Peace Alliance, and interfaith relief efforts like Shifa, Kansas City Helps, and Heart to Heart International.

Nowadays hospitals, schools, religious organizations and others are helping us all to recognizing the faiths of our neighbors through a variety of special programs.

2b. Interfaith Organizations

Center for Spirit at Work

4310 Madison Av #204, KCMO 64111
816.268.1077

CSW, founded eight years ago as the Cathedral Center for Faith and Work, then based at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, offers programs by people of all faiths. Recent speakers have included Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim leaders in their fields, such as Henry Bloch, Irv Hockaday, Gary Forsee, Tom McDonnell, Mike Haverty, Bill, Terry and Peggy Dunn, Dick Miller, Carol Marinovich, Kay Barnes, Jim Stowers, Shirley and Barnett Helzberg, Joan Israelite, Adel Hall, Buck O'Neal, Al Brooks, Clyde Wendel, Tom Hoenig, Mahnaz Shabbir, and Vern Barnet.

These breakfast and dinner sessions are open to the public. Those who attend get thinking of the highest quality from folks of different faiths about how the spirit informs, or can inform, the workplace.

Community Praying for Peace

www.communitypeace.com/id18.html

CPP provides opportunities for people of many faiths to pray together for peace.

CRES

Box 4165, Overland Park, KS 66204
Box 45414, Kansas City, MO 64171

www.cres.org; staff@cres.org

Founded in 1982, its many achievements include the sponsoring of annual Thanksgiving Sunday Interfaith Ritual Meals, begun in 1985, founding KC Interfaith Council in 1989 (with American Indian, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian-Protestant, Christian-Roman Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, and Zoroastrian members), organizing the 2001 Gifts of Pluralism conference (attended by 250 youth and adults from these faiths as well as Christian Orthodox and Free-Thinker traditions) and many other workshops and conferences, planning the city-wide 2002 9/11 observances, networking with many other organizations and staffing their programs, consultation, teaching, writing, and civic leadership including chairing the 2002 Diversity Task Force study which issued a 77-page report.

A 32-page *interfaith Passport* and other programs were the subject of a half-hour CBS-TV special in 2002, now imitated in other cities.

Donna Ziegenhorn of the CRES auxiliary Mosaic, wrote the play *The Hindu and the Cowboy and Other Kansas City Stories* from a collection of some 80 interviews from area residents of all faiths after the 2001 conference.

The 12-page monthly color journal *Many Paths* and web site are key interfaith resources.

CRES minister emeritus, the Rev Vern Barret, DMn, has won many awards from Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and secular groups. He is a frequent speaker at area churches and writes the Wednesday "Faiths and Beliefs" column in *The Kansas City Star*.

Board chairs David Stallings, Larry Guillot, and L Joseph Archias have helped to make interfaith work a mainstream Kansas City priority.

For the CRES vision, mission, values, programs, and other positions, visit the web site or turn to page 8 of *Many Paths*, and examine the research program suggested by the chart on the next page. CRES was founded as the [World Faiths] Center for Religious Experience and Study, sometimes known as the [multifaith] Community Resource for Exploring Spirituality.

Crescent Peace Society

Box 27023, Shawnee Mission, KS 66225
913.491.5509

CPS seeks to enhance appreciation of Islam through educational and cultural activities in the Kansas City area. It builds friendships and liaison with schools, religious groups, and media to better represent Islam's peaceful nature.

Cultural Crossroads Inc

3605 Blue Ridge Boulevard
Independence, MO 64052; 816.737.5979
CulturalCrossroads@hotmail.com
www.culturalcrossroads-kc.org

Cultural Crossroads, led by Mary and Greg McCoy, was incorporated in 2001 and conducts cross-cultural education in an interactive environment, designed to promote tolerance and respect through understanding the commonalities across diverse cultures. The focus of all pro-

grams is on common life experiences of people of all cultures and an understanding of the unifying elements within an environment of diversity. Volunteer opportunities are limitless and include creation, scheduling, and presentation of educational programs, publicity and communication, and promoting the organization. Cultural Crossroads is also seeking to develop a cultural heritage center in the greater Kansas City area.

Diversity Coalition (Kansas City)

c/o Allan Abrams, aabrams@yahoo.com

The KCDC was organized in 1996 by the late Dr David Shapiro as an adjunct to his Minority Museum which opened in 1991 in south Kansas City. It has no formal membership and no dues. Its participants discuss international or national political issues, particularly emotionally charged topics which could be affected by one's faith, ethnic, or regional perspective. Meetings usually are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month., 7-9p.

Festival of Faiths, www.villagepres.org

While there has been no formal announcement, we wish to salute those at Village Presbyterian Church who are carefully exploring a Louisville-type metro-wide collaboration to display, enjoy, and celebrate our religious diversity.

Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council

www.kcinterfaith.org
c/o the Rev David Nelson, DMin, Convener
816.453.3835, david@humanagenda.com

Organized by Vern Barret in 1989, the Council was a program of CRES until 2005. A 5,000-word history of this period is available at <http://www.cres.org/now/ifc-hist.htm>. CRES support for 2004 included staff work by CRES administrative assistant, Simon Gatsby, who then transitioned the Council to independence as part of a cooperative plan for 2005 with advice and some funding from Religions for Peace-USA. The Council's work is reported in the monthly CRES journal, *Many Paths*. That year on November 10, the Council awarded Vern its first "Table of Faiths" award, presented by Mayor Kay Barnes, at a luncheon with over 600 people of all faiths. A 12-minute DVD with Vern, Governor Sebelius, Huston Smith, and local political and business leaders was produced and shown, and is available from the Council. This year's Table of Faiths luncheon is set for Nov 14 and honors CRES Amity Shaman Ed Chasteen and Don and Adele Hall.

The Council's statement: "We are growing a sustainable, pervasive culture of knowledge, respect, appreciation, and trust amongst people of all faiths and religious traditions in the greater Kansas City community." The Council usually meets the 2nd Monday of the month.

Its goals: 1. To develop deeper understanding within the community of each other's faiths and traditions, and to foster appropriate interfaith dialogue and interaction, 2. To model spiritual and religious values, especially mutual respect and cooperation, in a society often intolerant of cultural and religious diversity, 3. To develop and provide resources, networking, and programs for the community through the arts and education to increase appreciation for cultural and religious diversity, 4. To work with educational, spiritual and religious leaders and the media in promoting accurate and fair portrayal of the faiths within our community, and 5. To help the community become more aware of the spiritual values that can help resolve issues that occur in the environmental, social and personal realms of our lives.

It offers two interfaith book clubs. David Nelson facilitates the northland book club the Mid-Continent Library, Antioch Branch 6060 N Chestnut in Gladstone 7-8:30p the second Wednesday of each month; 816.454.1306. Pam Peck facilitates the south club. It meets four times a year, 7p the first Monday in February, May, August, and November, at the Christian Science Center, 504 E. 112, Red Bridge Shopping Center, 111 (Red Bridge Road) and Holmes; 816.268.8212.

Harmony/NCCJ

4901 Main, Suite 300, Kansas City, MO 64112
www.kcharmony.org, 816-333-5059

In 1988, KCMO Mayor pro-tem Emanuel Cleaver and KCPL's president/CEO Drue Jennings led an 18-month effort to improve race relations and civic comity. Maggie Finefrock, now Director of The Learning Project and CRES CLO and was then co-director. As part of the exploration of diversity, a Religions Task Force produced a covenant redrafted by Vern to be inclusive of all faiths, signed 1989 Aug 21 in Loose Park by members of 10 faiths.

The cantor at Beth Shalom initiated the Harmony Choral Celebration Concert, the only known interfaith concert in the United States that features both a mass choir and demonstration choirs.

Kansas City would not let Harmony go out of existence after 18 months, and it has become a permanent and increasingly valuable leader in educating about diversity in the metro area for business, government, the media, and congregations.

In 1996, Cleaver, now mayor, commissioned a task force on race relations. Maggie was chair of the religion/spirituality cluster, and Vern was assigned the task of drafting its recommendation, paragraph 6 of which, inspired by John Weston, called for the creation of a Congregational Partners Program to assist congregations of different faiths to build relationships of trust. Dozens of such partnerships have since developed, now under Harmony auspices, including one three-way with Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish congregations. The program is now led by Josef Walker, Faith Communities Program Coordinator, as part of a larger effort for HarmonyNCCJ to encourage interfaith understanding. Other programs under his direction now include the Choral Concert and Interfaith Unitown.

The 2001 Citistates Group reported that Harmony "consistently produces the nation's most ambitious array of programs aimed at building better relations across racial lines."

In 2005, after excellent staff preparation by Harmony and NCCJ, Vern, on the board of NCCJ, moved that the two organizations to merge. The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) was begun in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews to "fight" bigotry. Kansas City's office began in 1953. In 1999 the name was changed to the National Conference for Community and Justice. Locally its expert summer programs for youth

have included dealing with religious prejudice. For four years NCCJ and CRES staffed a day-long “Journey toward Understanding” for high school students to spend a day exploring their different faiths.

Harmony and NCCJ were cosponsors of the historic 2001 “Gifts of Pluralism” interfaith conference managed by CRES, and CRES is especially grateful for the help from Diane Hershberger and Juan Rangel who led the organizations, then separate.

The current “Faith Communities” page on the organization’s web site says:

“We empower individuals and congregations to explore the spiritual and religious dimensions of our city and world. We honestly name both the opportunities and the tensions inherent in pluralism and engage in respectful dialogue about the possibilities and the perils the future may hold depending on our choices and the actions of others.

“Our programs enrich personal spiritual journeys and congregational life as individuals learn about and affirm their own beliefs while experiencing the path and practices of other traditions. We are committed to offering learning that may be applied to daily life at home, on the job, and in the civic community.

“We collaborate with many other partners to develop and promote panel discussions, book clubs, field trips, youth activities, and much more.

Contact Josef Walker who is available to speak to and resource congregations, educational institutions, and organizations.

HateBusters, Inc.

Box 442, Liberty, MO 64069; 816-792-2272
www.hatebusters.com; HateBuster@aol.com

HateBusters, developed by Ed Chasteen, now CRES Amity Shaman, helps people who have been hurt because someone hated them. “We never say no when asked for help. We get more publicity for the good guys than the bad guys. We teach people how to like people who are not like them. We bring people together.” It produces the Human Family Reunion dinners.

Institute for Interfaith Dialog

www.interfaithdialog.org.

IID seeks to “unite the global communities through interfaith dialogue by sharing the differences and similarities in cultures and religions in an effort to achieve world peace.” IID is inspired by the living Turkish figure Fetullah Gulen, who advocates a “moderate” form of Islam.

Institute for Spirituality in Health

Steven L Jeffers, PhD, Director
Shawnee Mission Medical Center
9100 W 74 Street, SM, KS 66204
www.shawneeemission.org/content/view/94/278 — 913-676-8104

The vision of the ISH is to deliver health care within an environment that values medical skills complemented by spirituality, often expressed in the language of faith. Led by religious, medical, civic, and business leaders of various faith tradi-

tions, ISH advocates addressing spiritual care in medicine and health care.

ISH provides community and professional education, publications and research on the topic of spirituality in the health care setting. In addition, the Institute leads interfaith prayer teams, which provide encouragement and support for SMMC associates and physicians, as well as local, state and national civic and religious leaders. Annual events such as the Community Prayer Breakfast, Physician/Clergy Conference, and symposiums on various topics allow community members to explore their spirituality and determine where it fits within their health care needs.

JCRB/AJC

5801 W 115th Street #203
Shawnee Mission, KS 66211
www.jewishkcc.org/agencies/jcrb
913-327-8126, jcrbajc@jewishkcc.org

The Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee was once perhaps the most important and skillful interfaith organization in Kansas City.

Mainstream Voices of Faith

www.mainstreamvoicesoffaith.com

MVOF is a religious coalition promotes an inclusive approach to issues of faith and public policy through education and advocacy.

A Way of Looking at Our De-Sacralized Society and the World’s Religions as a Whole System

9-Nov-06
The Conference was held Oct 27-28, 2001 (and part of Oct 26), at Pembroke Hill School on State Line, with 250 people representing 15 faith groups — American Indian, Bahá’í, Buddhist, Christian (Protestant, Catholic, Ortho-

Crisis	Examples of secularism’s crises	Faith Family	Sacred is found in	Perversion
Environmental	pollution (toxic wastes, as from the auto) overpopulation; loss of diversity of species deforestation; global warming damaged and dying oceanic life	PRIMAL Ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman; Mayan, Incan; American Indian and Tribal African; and many others.	Nature (ecological interdependence)	Superstition
Personal Identity	addiction (substances, consumerism, power) dependencies (handling others’ feelings) prejudice (sexism, racism, homophobia) loss of sense of vocation and direction	ASIAN Hinduism, Buddhism Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, etc.	Consciousness (inner awareness,	Narcissism
Social Cohesion	violence (in movies, games, real lives) exploitation (disparity between rich and poor) disengaged citizenry (private over common	MONOTHEISTIC Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Bahá’í, Zoroastrianism, Unitarian Universalism, Marxism, Am’n Civil	History of covenanted community	Self-Righteousness

As with any generalization, exceptions and qualifications abound. For example, Shinto is Asian but is really a nature religion, Sikhism is sometimes regarded as syncretistic, and Marxism may be atheistic. Nonetheless, this scheme may be useful as a starting point for study.
This outline does not characterize any faith; it simply suggests some ways of looking at similarities and differences from the point of view of some students of comparative religion, but it does not mean that anyone who follows any particular religious path will agree with the generalization. Indeed, in any richly developed faith, elements of many other faiths can also be found, though they may not be as frequently emphasized.

Wisdom from Our Faiths Cited in “The Gifts of Pluralism” Conference Concluding Declaration:

- ▶ The gifts of pluralism have taught us that nature is to be respected, not just controlled. Nature is a process that includes us, not a product external to us that can just be used or disposed of. Our proper attitude toward nature is awe, not utility. When we do use nature as we must — for food, housing, and other legitimate purposes — we should do so with respect and care, preserving its beauty and mindful of its connection to the Sacred and ourselves.
- ▶ We have also learned that our true personhood may not be in the images of ourselves constrained by any particular social identities. When we realize this, our acts can proceed spontaneously from duty and compassion, and we need not be unduly attached to results beyond our control.
- ▶ Finally, when persons in community govern themselves less by profit and more by the covenant of service, the flow of history towards peace and justice is honored and advanced. CRES, 913.649.5114, www.cres.org; cres@cres.org

Glossary

<i>Secular</i>	fragmented, partial, divided, unrelated; the profane.
<i>Sacred</i>	ultimate worth, the network on which all depends, cornerstone of all values, holy, holistic, wholesome, sensed in “peak experiences” which shape or direct or give meaning to life, opening us to the Infinite.
<i>Religion</i>	arises from the search for, and encounters with, the sacred: we discover how to live in the world; the holy evokes wonder, grows in gratitude, matures in service.
<i>Spiritual</i>	breathing with a sense of what really counts.

Midwest Center for Holocaust Education

5801 W 115th Street #106
Overland Park, KS 66211; 913.327.8190
www.mchekc.org; mcekc@org;

The Midwest Center of Holocaust Education teaches the history and lessons of the Holocaust to people of all races and faiths in the Midwest to prevent its recurrence and perpetuate understanding, compassion, and mutual respect.

National Council of Jewish Women

Greater Kansas City Section, 913 648-0747.

NCJW works through research, education, advocacy and community service to improve the quality of life for women, children and families, and strives to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all. Its annual February luncheon has been focused on Jewish Christian Muslim exchange.

OpenCircle

www.opencircleonline.com, 816.931.0738

Among OpenCircle's programs are occasional film showings of spiritual and interfaith interest at the Tivoli Theatre.

Pathways

Pathways was founded in 1999 by Gene Flanery (flanerman@aol.com) to promote interfaith dialogue, foster respect for all religions, and celebrate diversity. Its members include the Hindu, Christian, Sikh, and American Indian traditions. Monthly meetings are held at the Cross Point Church in Shawnee, KS. While there is no official membership in Pathways, participants strive to achieve balance between the various participating faiths. Each year the group presents both an annual interfaith picnic in the summer and an annual dinner in January.

Pathways Goals: •To learn to listen with respect to those who are different •To promote racial harmony and fight against negative stereotyping in society •To provide a receptive place to speak about faith in God •To foster an attitude of respect for all religions •To educate others about the benefits of a multicultural perspective •To celebrate diversity in culture and appreciate religious differences.

A note about Gene: He has been a missionary for a quarter century, with work in Mexico, the Philippines, India, Thailand, China, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Spain. He served as Coordinator of the historic 2001 "Gifts of Pluralism" interfaith conference in Kansas City. His commitment to his own Christian faith and to respectful dialogue with other faiths makes him an especially valuable asset to Kansas City.

Person to Person

www.communitypeace.com/id15.htm

Mahnaz Shabbir and Sheila Sonnenschein offer a powerful presentation as Muslim and Jewish leaders and mothers about their friendship and learning about each other's faith.

Salaam Shalom Celebration

www.salaamshalomcelebration.org.

The annual KC area dinner originated as a twin to a gathering, or *hafla*, in Israel begun by Fouad Salman, Samir Dabit, and David Leichman in an effort to bring together Jews and Arabs. Fouad, Samir, and David come here and cook an amazing feast (with dietary laws observed). A clergy breakfast is also held. Both the first dinner in 2004 and the second attracted 500 guests at Leawood's Ironwoods Park Alpine Lodge. KCMO is the 2007 site.

Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition

Jerry Rees, 913.568.4250

Margaret Thomas, mgt84roe@aol.com
www.sustainable-sanctuary.org

The mission of the Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition is to encourage sustainable living initiatives, ie, "Care for Creation" in faith communities, through education about and promotion of sustainable actions.

We live in a time where there is denial of the global climate change that is fueled by humankind's ever growing demands upon our Earth. The Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition does not accept as inevitable these wasteful ways continuing to cause ecological disasters to happen all around us. We also believe that if we are to change our collective behavior, we need to accept an accurate and positive vision of everyone's reality.

This vision of reality celebrates all humankind as the stewards of this diversity of life on Earth and supporters of the natural systems on which all life depends. We believe that to cherish what has been created is our spiritual and moral responsibility – our ultimate responsibility to all children and all grandchildren.

We believe what we can do here and now is to build a coalition of faith communities that rapidly begin to reflect on what humankind is doing. We will gather, share, and urge others to join us in the same spirit that embraces change so stewardship and earthkeeping will soon become the sacred responsibilities for all.

Urantia Book Fellowship, The

Susan Cook, 816-716-4944

415 Shannon Avenue, Smithville, MO 64089

The Urantia Fellowship sponsors an on-line class in Interfaith dialogue. The intent of this course is learning to listen and exchange in healthy dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures. This course is 8 weeks long and involves reading before each "class." We then meet via conference call to discuss learning opportunities, growth, difficulty, and ideas for further development. This course is in process and involves students from New York to Hawaii. Please contact us if you are interested in this course for 2007.

Coming up is an on-line course, "You want to learn about Different Religions?" This course will have different facilitators each week that represent their faith. A reading will be sent out the week before each conference call where we'll then have the opportunity to be taught and ask questions. Why a conference call? So people and facilitators from different cities can come together. Please call for questions about enrollment in 2007.

3. Annual Interfaith Events

Some events may migrate from one month to another.

Mayors' Prayer Breakfasts. — Area observances vary from decidedly Christian to deliberately interfaith events. *The Raytown Community Interfaith Alliance's observance truly is a prayer event embracing every faith.*

JANUARY

- The annual Martin Luther King observance at Community Christian Church brings folks together from many faiths.
- Salaam Shalom Dinner (see).
- Journey toward Understanding (high school program).

FEBRUARY

- Jan 30 - Apr 4 The Season for Non-Violence, an observance of 64 days between the memorial anniversaries of Gandhi and King, is hosted in Kansas City by the Center for Spiritual Living.
- National Council of Jewish Women luncheon
- (Greater KC) Mayors' Prayer Breakfast, KCMO

MARCH

- Raytown Mayor's Prayer Breakfast
- Harmony Week Luncheon

SEPTEMBER

- Annual Conference on Health and Spirituality, Community of Christ Temple.

NOVEMBER

- Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council Table of Faiths luncheon, begun 2005
- Harmony Choral Concert
- Crescent Peace Society annual dinner.
- **CRES Thanksgiving Sunday Family Interfaith Ritual Meal** (the Sunday before the holiday, 6p), since 1985, a full meal in liturgical style with greetings from American Indian, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, Zoroastrian and Freethinker traditions and American history and aspirations.

The participatory meal including parts for children in a text with pictures is drawn from William Bradford's *History of the Plymouth Plantation* with updated materials to express the American vision of religious freedom.

Awards for distinguished interfaith leadership are presented.

- Raytown Community Interfaith Alliance Thanksgiving Service (Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving).
- Pilgrim Chapel Interfaith Thanksgiving Service (Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving).

DECEMBER

- Interfaith World Peace Celebration" Dec. 31 at 6a (gather at 5:30a), Rime Buddhist Center.