

Chapter IX

Faith Groups and the Earth Charter

The introduction and overview has been prepared by Mary Evelyn Tucker and is followed by essays by Kamla Chowdhry and Joan Anderson. As will be evident from the Overview, the Earth Charter Initiative is still in the process of gathering full information on the extent of the use of the Earth Charter by various religious groups.

A) Overview by Mary Evelyn Tucker

Introduction

The contributions of the religious community to the formation of the Earth Charter were noteworthy in the drafting process. The strong commitment to values and ethics that the Charter embodies can be further promoted by the world's religions. The urgency of the planetary crisis we are facing is calling the religions forward to address the problems of equitable sustainable development.

Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that the religious traditions are poised to play an important role in promoting the Earth Charter and its principles for a sustainable future. The potential here is enormous and has yet to be fully realized. Part of the difficulty in this regard is that there are no international organizations that bring together all of the world's religions. Moreover, representation within each of the denominations is controversial. It is highly debatable who should speak for one of the traditions when a spectrum of theological positions are evident in each of the religions ranging from orthodox to reform or conservative to progressive. Despite these obstacles many religious communities are very open to the Charter and would be prepared to do more with some guidance or encouragement.

It is also worth noting that within the academic community in the United States there is a growing recognition that environment studies programs need to have a component that includes ethics and values. There is a realization that science and policy are necessary but not sufficient for the solutions of our many environmental problems. The Stanford scientist, Paul Ehrlich made an important statement in this regard at the Ecological Society of America in August 2004. The heads of major environmental studies programs at Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Stanford, Duke, and the University of North Carolina have all expressed agreement with this position which represents a major shift in thinking. The Earth Charter can be an important part of this discussion of environmental values and global ethics within environmental studies programs.

Moreover, in the development community there is an understanding that religious and cultural values matter enormously in effective sustainable development projects. The Harvard web site on world religions and ecology may be helpful in underscoring these points. In particular, there is a section on the web site that has an extensive bibliography on poverty, development and religion. See <http://www.harvard.environment.edu/religion>.

Formative Input During the Drafting Process

The Earth Charter Initiative can be seen as not only a document but also a process. In the drafting stages it involved the most wide spread consultation ever to take place for an international document. The world's religious communities gave input to the principles of the Charter in a variety of ways both formal and informal. Some of the early input came through the 10 part conference series on World Religions and Ecology from 1996-1998 at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religion. At some of these conferences Steven Rockefeller was able to present the Charter in its draft form.

During the drafting period several major themes were highlighted as important to be included in the Charter from the perspective of the world's religions. Some of these themes included a strong sense of social justice and equity from the Jewish and Christian groups. From Buddhism there arose a sense of universal responsibility (as articulated by the Dalai Lama) along with a keen sense of the interconnected value of life. From Hinduism and Jainism there was an insistence on non-violence toward humans, other animals and the larger natural world. Indigenous representatives also urged that traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) be included along with a sense of the protection of biodiversity and land. The phrase in the Preamble, "Earth is alive" was considered to be of immense importance for indigenous peoples. Similarly the larger cosmological framework of the Preamble was indebted not only to contemporary science but also to the organic holism of Confucian and Taoist thought.

Varieties of Responses and Use by the Religious Traditions

1) Endorsement

Approximately 220 religious groups have endorsed the Earth Charter. Many of them represent a significant numbers of members. These religious groups are located in a wide variety of countries. Many of the faith groups that have endorsed the Earth Charter are rooted in the various Christian denominations. The Earth Charter has received overwhelming support from congregations of Catholic nuns as approximately 80 congregations of women religious worldwide have endorsed the Earth Charter. Several Buddhist organizations and groups with other religious and spiritual beliefs have also endorsed the Earth Charter, and a number of groups with other religious and spiritual beliefs have also endorsed the Earth Charter. Significant support for the Charter has come from indigenous peoples in the Circumpolar North, New Guinea, and North America.

Many religious based organizations have endorsed the Earth Charter, including: Pax Christi International, a non-governmental Catholic peace movement with members worldwide; Pax Romana ICMICA, an international association of Catholic professionals and intellectuals composed of local federations, groups, and individuals; the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, which seeks to "cultivate harmony between the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding

institutions”; the United Church of Canada, the largest Protestant denomination in Canada, and Soka Gakkai International, a Buddhist association with more than 12 million members in 190 countries and territories worldwide.

The endorsements of various religious traditions and religious based organizations should be encouraged and expanded. However, beyond endorsement there is a need to think of strategies to make the document an effective call to action for a just, equitable and sustainable future.

2) Context

Rethinking mission- Many religious groups, especially the Catholic nuns have used the Charter to rethink their mission in a broader global context of sustainability.

3) Ethical Linkages

One of the most important contributions of the Charter for the religious communities has been to bring together a broader cosmological perspective with a call for environmental justice and social justice. In other words, the understanding of the intricate unfolding of evolution and the complexity of ecological systems is an important basis of the Charter that is being linked more directly to human oriented justice concerns. Leonardo Boff, the South American liberation theologian is an important spokesperson for this perspective that recognizes attention to liberating people without care for the Earth is insufficient. These issues need to be linked as they are in the Charter.

4) Celebration/Ritual/Art

Some of the religious communities are using the Charter as a means of celebration and ritual and this needs to be further explored. Ceremonies of repentance for ecological damage have emerged along with prayers of praise for the beauty and intricacy of creation. Moreover, religious communities are calling for hope for effective human action for a sustainable future. Art has emerged in this process including the highly effective Ark of Hope that draws heavily on religious symbolism.

5) International Connections

It is becoming increasingly clear that various international organizations such as UNEP and UNDP recognize the importance of the religious communities in helping to foster their work. Klaus Topfer, the director of UNEP, and Adan Amin, the director of the NY office of UNEP, have frequently referred to the world’s religions as important partners in environmental protection. Moreover, in the Earth Dialogues conferences sponsored by Gorbachev the key question has emerged, “Is Ethics the Missing Link?” These would be important avenues to pursue for highlighting the Earth Charter as a context for global ethics for sustainable development.

C) Deepening the Discussion Within and Between Religions

1. Denominational Contributions

1. Jewish

The Earth Charter Commissioner, Rabbi Soetendorp of the Netherlands, has no doubt been promoting the Charter in Jewish communities and can give us more information on this. I have not been able to determine if there is much activity in the Jewish community in the US around the Charter. Adam Stern at the Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) may be able to tell us if there are any efforts of Jewish groups to support the Charter

Adam@coejl.org

Or Rabbi Larry Troster

larry@coejl.org

2. Christian

Greek Orthodox

Symposia on Religion, Science, and Environment have been sponsored by His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew. These symposia focused on the conditions of the sea have included some discussion of the Earth Charter, and Mary Evelyn Tucker has brought copies of the Earth Charter to the symposia on the Black Sea and the Aegean. <http://www.ec-patr.gr>.

Protestant

The World Council of Churches Ecumenical Retreat Center in Bossey, Switzerland, sponsored a conference on the Earth Charter. Dieter Hessel and Rick Clugston met with the leadership of the World Council of Churches and the US National Council of Churches but were not able to secure endorsements. It would seem that some follow up with Bob Edgar the President of the National Council of Churches would be helpful as he has assumed such an important leadership role.

Also contact Cassandra Carmichael the Eco-Justice Coordinator for NCC -Phone: (202) 544-2350 ext. 27 - E-mail: cassandra@toad.net) See also <http://nccecojustice.org>.

The Wyoming Association of Churches -- of whose Board he is a member -- is undertaking a statewide study of the Earth Charter in 2005. www.WyomingAssociationofChurches.org For more information, contact Donn Kesselheim (ouzel@rmisp.com).

To involve the Evangelical Community more it would be good to explore:

Care for Creation Web site

<http://creationcare.org>

Evangelical Declaration on the Care for Creation
<http://www.creationcare.org/resources/declaration.php>

Quaker

The Quaker community has endorsed the Charter.

<http://www.fcun.org/pubs/Newsletter%201804/newsletter28d.html>

Ruah Swennerfelt, a Quaker, has been very supportive of the Earth Charter and it is used in their outreach and a new publication entitled *Earthcare for Friends: A Study Guide for Individuals and Faith Communities* (Burlington, Vermont: Quaker Earthcare Witness, 2004). See also <http://www.SAYMA.org>. The Charter was used at the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Associates of the Society of Friends. Also, Donn Kesselheim is working from the Quaker perspective in Wyoming on study groups on the Charter across Wyoming (ouezel@rmisp.com).

Unitarian

In 2002, the General assembly of the Unitarian-Universalist Association endorsed the Earth Charter. The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) represents the interests of more than one thousand Unitarian Universalist congregations, on a continental scale. Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion with its roots in the Jewish and Christian traditions. It “keeps an open mind to the religious questions people have struggled with in all times and places”.

The Unitarian Universalists adopted the Earth Charter at the end of their annual five-day General Assembly held in Quebec City. This Assembly was attended by more than 4,100 people. In endorsing the Earth Charter, the delegates to the General Assembly called for all member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association to do likewise.

Ron Engel has been instrumental in these efforts in the U-U community.

Catholic

Mikhail Gorbachev, co-chair of the Earth Charter Commission, presented the Earth Charter to Pope John Paul II following the launch in 2000. However, there has been no formal recognition of the Earth Charter by the Pope.

The Earth Charter Commissioner, Leonardo Boff, has done important work in Brazil and in other parts of Latin America to assist in promoting the Earth Charter among Catholic communities and beyond. He successfully integrates the universe story, liberation theology, and the Earth Charter.

Of all the religious groups we have been able to collect the most information in the area of the Catholic community, although largely in North America. In the Catholic world the women religious (Catholic nuns) have been some of the key leaders in promoting the Charter in their communities and in public workshops and conferences.

- **Call to Action**

This is an organization of some 8,000 members, largely Catholic lay men and women, along with nuns and priests. It is several decades old and is a forum for discussion of Church related issues within a progressive framework. In November 2004 in Milwaukee Mary Evelyn Tucker made a presentation on the Charter to a group of some 300 people. It was well received and the majority of people attending were familiar with the Charter and were already using it in a variety of ways including teaching, as well as a basis for a broader call to social justice and environmental action within Church groups.

- **Center for Social Change**

The Center for Social Change, USA, was launched in 2001 with a vision of helping communities give voice to their expectations for a better place to live. Its mission is to “develop and promote research, communication, and action for social change with a focus on quality-of-life issues, social policy, and the soul of the community”. The Earth Charter is the context from which all of the Centers for Social Change initiatives are viewed.

Under the leadership of president Sister Michaela Rock, Centers for Social Change created an Earth Charter theme workbook for young people entitled “...and justice for all.” This workbook, published in 2003, is designed to empower young people to become actively involved in social action by experiencing the Earth Charter principles and learning the value of creating social policy and impacting public policy through experiential activities. It is arranged into sixteen weekly lessons intended to create a hands-on learning experience in social justice for youth.

- **Leadership Conference for Women Religious (LCWR) in Washington, DC**

In the summer of 2003 Mary Evelyn Tucker gave two workshops at the annual meeting of LCWR held in Detroit. It was well attended and it was clear that many of the religious communities of nuns are already using the Charter and are among the strongest supporters of it in the Christian world.

LCWR has also produced a publication called *Tending the Holy* that uses selected passages from the Charter and from scripture for reflection, discussion and prayer. See www.lcwr.org

• **School Sisters of Notre Dame**

After endorsing the Earth Charter in 2001 the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (Shalom) Coordinating Committee of the School Sisters of Notre Dame began to work to promote the Earth Charter and to disseminate it to members of School Sisters of Notre Dame congregations. Sisters were encouraged to reflect upon the Earth Charter and implement it in the work that they were already doing.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have a long-standing tradition of working for justice and peace, and the themes of economic and social justice within the Earth Charter easily resonate with their endeavors. Caring for the Earth is part of the School Sisters of Notre Dame's mission to serve.

Contact:

School Sisters of Notre Dame
c/o Eileen Reilly
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Wilton, Ct 06897
203 762- 3318
communications@ssndwilton.org

• **Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA**

Contact: Sister Ann Oestreich IHM (Congregation Justice Coordinator) www.cscsisters.org

Earth Charter USA sent out a questionnaire to a number of religious organizations. Among those responding were the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Their response are as follows:

1. How have you used the Earth Charter (e.g., in workshops, courses, discussion groups, conferences)?

The Congregation endorsed the Earth Charter in 2002. Since then, we have disseminated copies to all of our members (500+), used it as the basis for congregation-wide prayer services, and offered suggestions for implementation on the local, national and international levels.

We began educational efforts on the Earth Charter with our members prior to 2000. Sister Eileen Gannon, OP, came to Saint Mary's and gave input to our Justice Committee, the group that is charged with implementing the Earth Charter.

We had a campus-wide audit which was done by Al Fritsch, SJ and Paula Gonzalez, among others. We are working to implement the suggestions made in the audit throughout campus.

Our sisters in Sao Paulo, Brazil, who run the Colegio Santa Maria, have educated their school faculty about the Earth Charter and they have re-organized their curriculum around the Earth

Charter principles. Each class in the Colegio is involved in a project to implement one of the Earth Charter principles, many of which engage the local community in Sao Paulo.

During Lent we've organized a Vespers service that focuses on the Earth, entitled Earth Stations.

In 2002 we published a brochure entitled *Earth at Risk* that featured the Earth Charter as a resource. This brochure was disseminated to groups throughout the U.S., including the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Group in Canada, Asia, Africa and Latin America also used the resource. It is available in English, French and Spanish. The brochure is available as a pdf file at http://www.csesisters.org/justice/pdf/hcij_ere.pdf A publication of the Holy Cross International Justice Office, entitled *Perspectives*, featured the Earth Charter in Volume 2, Number 2 issue <http://www.holycrossjustice.org/publications.htm> Both the Sisters of the Holy Cross and the International Justice Office provide links to the Earth Charter on our web sites.

The Earth Charter was used in many of the Chapter discussions in 2004 (Chapter is the governing body of the Congregation which sets its direction for a five-year period). In June 2005 we offered a training seminar for justice coordinators, part of which was a day-long session devoted to the Earth Charter and its evolution (presenter was Joe Holland). We've disseminated copies of the book by Joe Holland and Elisabeth Ferraro, *The Earth Charter: A Study Book for Reflection and Action*, to seminar participants and members of our Justice Committee.

We have chosen to organize all of our work for justice in the next four years around Principles II, III, and IV of the Earth Charter, devoting a focus year to each principle. This year (August 2005 – August 2006) we will focus on Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace.

We also give financial support to the Religious Orders Partnership (ROP), which promotes awareness and implementation of the Earth Charter.

2. How many people participated and how long did your Earth Charter activity last?

We've tried to engage our entire congregation (500+ sisters) in Earth Charter activities. All of our sisters, plus other members of the Holy Cross family (2500 priests, brothers and sisters) have received information about the Earth Charter. Most have participated in the prayer services; several have been part of workshops and/or informational sessions on the Earth Charter.

3. What were the results? (What worked? What didn't?)

With our population, prayer services always work. They help to integrate the Earth Charter with our congregational commitments, and to help us realize the oneness of all of creation.

Workshops, seminars and input days have been very good. We often show the film, *A Quiet Revolution*, to illustrate how ordinary people can implement Earth Charter principles and make a tremendous difference in the world.

What doesn't work is just handing out copies of the Earth Charter and not putting it in some kind of meaningful context for people.

We feel that our efforts thus far have been quite successful and we hope to build on them in the next three years.

4. What kinds of promotional or educational materials did you develop? (Please send us materials such as syllabi, posters, flyers, workshop descriptions, reports, photos, and a description of your planned follow-up activities as appropriate).

See the web sites referred to in the answer to question #1.

We would like to see more a-v materials developed on the Earth Charter; e.g. DVDs to introduce people to the Earth Charter, to explain the process of developing the Charter, to see how people are implementing it throughout the world, and that suggests creative ways to implement it locally, nationally and internationally.

• **Sinsinawa Dominican Order**

For Christmas 2004, two retired sisters of the Dominican Order of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, Srs. Mary Jane Herlik and Sue Klein, decided to mention their involvement in the Earth Charter and include the Earth Charter website in their Christmas letters. As a result, friends of the two sisters were informed about the Earth Charter and one couple has begun work to actively promote it. In addition, Srs. Mary Jane Herlik and Sue Klein made a presentation at their Southern Province Chapter with a triptych display, handouts, and key questions about the Earth Charter's principles. The Earth Charter was endorsed at that meeting and later by the Sinsinawa Dominican Central Council, which represents 700 members.

Contact:

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Other Congregations or Centers using the Earth Charter

This information has been provided by Earth Charter USA.

Congregation Sisters of St Agnes
Congregation of St Joseph
Congregation of the Sisters and Associates of St Joseph
Daughters of the Holy Spirit (Connecticut)
Daughters of Wisdom
Dominican Sisters
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael
Genesis Farm
Maryknoll Sisters
Presentation Sisters Wagga, Australia
Sisters of Charity of St Augustine
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of Earth
Sisters of St Francis of Assisi
Sisters of the Holy Cross
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sisters of the Presentation (Iowa)
Sisters of St Joseph
Sisters of St Joseph of La Grange
Sisters of St Joseph Consociate Membership
Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon
Society of the Holy Child Jesus
Presentation Convent (South Dakota)
Ursuline Sisters

• Global Education Associates

Global Education Associates involves an international network of Roman Catholic organizations. Pat Mische, the founder and director of GEA, has said she would be happy to give a fuller report when she returns from overseas on August 22. Home phone 301 474 0388.

- **Pax Christi** and **Pax Romana** have endorsed the Charter
Joe Holland could provide more information on this.
Ejholland@aol.com or joehollandoffice@aol.com

• Rockhaven Ecozoic Center

This is a Catholic renewal center and lay-spiritual community in House Springs, MO who actively integrates the principles of the Earth Charter into daily life and course/retreat offerings. The Earth Wisdom course and portions of the Rockhaven 100-day renewal

Programme are based upon the principles in the Earth Charter. The Earth charter is also discussed in detail at the Ecozoic Living workshops. Rockhaven uses the Earth Charter teaching material developed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame religious community.

Contact:

Denise Rushing
Rockhaven Ecozoic Center
7621 Rivermont Trail
House Springs, MO 63051
636-671-3623

A problem area:

Among Catholics the principal drawback for some groups has been a misperception that the Charter is endorsing abortion when it is calling for reproductive health care for women and girls. While many attempts have been made to rectify this, nonetheless the perception has not disappeared. How to address this issue may be important to attend to.

3. Bahá'í

Although not endorsing the Charter, the Bahá'í community has been an active supporter of the Charter and its framework of a global ethics for sustainable development. The leadership of the international Bahá'í community did not endorse the Earth Charter because they objected to several principles, including Principle 13.c. What they objected to in 13.c was the specific reference to a right to dissent. In the Bahá'í community, after a major policy decision has been made, dissent is not considered appropriate.

Contact: Peter Adriance - 202-833-8990, PAdriance@usbnc.org,
<http://www.usbnc.org/dept/oea.asp>.

4. Buddhism

The Earth Charter Commissioner, A.T. Ariyaratne from Sri Lanka, should be an important source of information in the use of the Charter among Buddhist communities in south Asia. The Sarvodaya organization, which Ariyaratne leads, has used the Earth Charter in its extensive community development work in Sri Lanka and he has personally warmly endorsed the document. See, for example, his essay in *Toward a Sustainable World: The Earth Charter in Action*.

A large number of Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama, contributed to the drafting process for the Earth Charter. On several occasions the Dalai Lama has indicated his support for the document. While there is a lot of potential in the Buddhist community for endorsing and using the Charter, for the most part Soka Gakkai International has taken a lead role in this regard (see report of Joan Anderson). There are, however, various avenues to pursue to expand the involvement of the Buddhist community. In North America this includes exploring the Buddhist Peace Fellowship based in Berkeley that is interested in

environmental work and has an important network of activists. These include engaged Buddhists such as Joanna Macy, Ken Kraft, Stephanie Kaza (all of whom are familiar with the Earth Charter), and others who would no doubt be very supportive. Moreover, the community of engaged Buddhists such as Sulak Sivaraksa in Thailand, and Thich Nat Hahn in France would be worth contacting in this regard.

The Earth Charter has been endorsed by the Rochester Zen Center and the Vermont Zen Center in the USA and by the Dharma Drum Monastery on Taiwan.

5. Confucianism

One of the leading scholars of Confucianism, Harvard professor Tu Weiming, attended some of the drafting meetings for the Charter and he speaks about it widely in his numerous lecture tours in Asia. He is a major supporter of the Charter and is an important vehicle for its entry into China in particular. Indeed, the Forum on Religion and Ecology is discussing with him the possibility of doing two conferences in China to highlight the crisis of over development. Two years ago the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Pan Yue, gave a speech on the need for an environmental ethics in China drawing on Chinese religious traditions such as Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Thus we intend to focus on Confucianism and on Daoism in these conferences. The Harvard volumes on Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are being translated into Chinese. In the conference context, the Charter will be a key document. It may also be that we can have the Charter included as an appendix of the translated volumes.

6. Daoism

While there is no endorsement yet of Daoists for the Charter it may be possible through contacts in western China that such an endorsement or involvement may be possible. The Daoist scholar, James Miller, may be of assistance in that regard. james.miller@queensu.ca He is in contact with us about organizing a conference on Daoism and ecology in China.

7. Hinduism/Jainism

The Earth Charter Commissioner, Kamla Chowdhry, a Hindu, has helped to support the Charter in India. Ashok Khosla has also been supportive, in particular at the CEE conference held in Ahmedabad. Both Chowdhry and Khosla link the Charter to Gandhian thought, especially with regard to non-violence and peace.

Satish Kumar, a Jain monk has done the same via the magazine *Resurgence* and Schumacher College in England. A major supporter for this work in the future may be Vandana Shiva in India.

8. Indigenous Traditions

The Earth Charter Commissioner, Henriette Rasmussen, has been active in encouraging support and use of the Charter in the Circumpolar Inuit organization. Finn Lynge has also played an important role in this region.

The Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), which includes thirty-one indigenous peoples living in Siberia and the Russian Far East, formally endorsed the Earth Charter at its tenth anniversary meeting in the spring of 2000. In addition, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Fenno-Scandinavian Saami Council, and the Danish Committee of Nature and Peoples of the North have joined RAIPON of Russia in pledging their full support of the Earth Charter. The support of these groups representing the inhabitants of the Arctic is especially significant since their representatives were concerned with the wording of certain principles in early drafts of the Charter. Their concerns, however, were addressed, and they are now actively engaged in promoting the document.

In 2003, the 870 tribal groups in Papua, New Guinea met and endorsed the Earth Charter and using the Earth Charter drafted their own local Earth Charter.

Chief Oren Lyons, who actively participated in the drafting process and directly influenced the construction of Principle 12, has been an important supporter of the Charter in North America.

9. Muslim

Iran

At the Tehran Conference on Religion, Environment, and Peace sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (June 2001 and May 2004) Mary Evelyn Tucker included the Charter in her presentations and brought copies to distribute. It was very well received by the 200 participants present at each conference.

Indonesia

At the Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta in August 2005 a seminar on world religions and ecology will be taught by Mary Evelyn Tucker with a Turkish scholar of Islam, Ibrahim Ozdemir. The Earth Charter will be an important component of this seminar.

II. Inter-religious Contributions

1. Parliament of the World's Religions

Barcelona, Spain

The Parliament of the World's Religions, from 7- 13 July 2004 in Barcelona, was a gathering of some 4,000 religious leaders, scholars, lay people, and journalists from around the world. The Parliament's panels and discussions focused on four major topics: water, refugees, international debt, and religiously motivated violence.

Earth Charter Youth Initiative (ECYI) Coordinator, Michael Slaby, organized a panel within the Parliament. The event, entitled *The Earth Charter: Shared Values for Building a Peaceful, Just and Sustainable Future*, was scheduled in the biggest venue at the Parliament and was attended by approximately 350 participants. Among the speakers at the panel were Professor Mary Evelyn Tucker, from Bucknell University; Earth Charter Commissioner, Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp; Josiane Troillet, with *Actions Pour Une Charte de la Terre*, France; and Michael Slaby. It is believed that this effort has raised the interest of many to use the Earth Charter in their work and further explore the linkages between the Earth Charter and other values based efforts.

Cape Town, South Africa

In December of 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa the Parliament of the World's Religions sponsored an important discussion regarding an emerging global ethics. This featured a presentation of the principles of the Earth Charter by Steven Rockefeller and the key concepts framing the Declaration of Global Ethics by Hans Kung. Responses were made to the presentations by the Harvard Confucian scholar, Tu Weiming, and the historian of religions, Mary Evelyn Tucker. The session was well attended and provoked a lively discussion. Steven Rockefeller and Kamla Chowdhry presented Benchmark Draft II to the Parliament at a plenary session, and during their presentation they presented a copy of Benchmark Draft II to Nelson Mandela who addressed the plenary session immediately afterwards.

2. Earth Charter Event in Germany

In 2005, The German Earth Charter Team organized an Earth Charter panel with an audience of approximately 500 people at one of the biggest Christian events in Germany. The event took place as part of "Kirchentag" ("church day") and was organized by the Lutheran-Protestant church, bringing together more than 300.000 people. Among the panelists were Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp (Earth Charter Commissioner), Angelika Zahrnt (the Head of Friends of the Earth Germany) and Michael Slaby (Youth Earth Charter Initiative Coordinator).

3. Earth Charter Focal Point in Germany

The Ecumenical One World Initiative (OeIEW), which focuses on ecology, development, and the promotion of a sustainable way of life, has been involved in the Earth Charter Initiative since 1999. In 2001, the Ecumenical One World Initiative worked with BUND, Friends of the Earth Germany, to produce a German Earth Charter Brochure. This brochure made the Earth Charter more accessible to the German people and helped to raise awareness. The 2001 Ecumenical One World Annual Meeting focused on the Earth Charter and the Earth Charter promotion process in Germany.

4. Spirituality and Sustainability Conferences in Assisi, Italy

For five summers (1995-2000) the Center for Respect of Life and Environment under the leadership of Rick Clugston held a series of conferences in Assisi, Italy, at which the Earth Charter was a major component. These conferences attracted many participants from the Catholic and Protestant communities in Europe and North America. Thomas Berry was a frequent participant.

5. Spiritual Celebrations of the Earth Charter

Various religious groups have created ceremonies for celebrating the spiritual and ethical values in the Earth Charter. One example would be “for love of earth” organized by Sally Linder and Cami Davis, in Burlington, Vermont, USA. Another example would be the programs organized by Sister Patricia Bombard, BVB, D.Min. Institute for Spiritual Leadership. www.spiritleader.org.

B) “Earth Charter: Sacred India” by Kamla Chowdhry

Looking back in history, especially of the last few hundred years, it is evident that the great ‘progress’ made by the West had its roots in the spread of colonialism, in the survival of the fittest, in the arrogant and violent use of power, and in the piracy of wealth and resources.

By 1914, 84.4% of the world’s terrestrial area had been colonized. In the colonized countries brutality was widely practiced not only in dealing with the natives, but also in dealing with natural resources.

During these last few hundred years, economic growth and development has also lent itself to major destruction of earth resources – disappearing of forests, falling water tables, collapsing fisheries, expanding deserts, rising sea levels, the destruction of eco-systems, and the dying of many species.

We now live with a deeply wounded Earth.

The scientists, ecologists, as also our religious and spiritual leaders, are telling us that we must learn to live in harmony with the Earth, on Earth terms, not on our increasing economic needs, and not on our greed of wanting more and more.

In order to move towards a sustainable future, to a more equitable future, to a non-violent and peaceful future, we will need to awaken again the inner spirituality of people. We believe the Earth Charter will help bring together science and spirituality, and the sense of the 'sacred' in our dealings with the Earth.

***Bhagvad Gita* and Gandhi: The Message and The Saint**

The *Bhagvad Gita*, a religious and a spiritual guide for action, was written around the 2nd and 5th century B.C. It is essentially a dialogue between two central speakers – Lord Krishna and Arjuna about 'duty' and about achieving oneness with '*Brahman*' (God)

The main task of *Gita*, in the conversation it contains between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, is to remove from Arjuna's mind – from all minds – the sense of the ego, and this sense of 'mine'. Lord Krishna points out to Arjuna that it is this attitude of possession which causes people to be selfish, jealous, and violent.

Gita's main message has been "you have the right to work but for the work's sake only. You have no right to the fruit of work. Desire for the fruits of work must never be your motive in working".

Bhagvad Gita has been Gandhi's strongest bond for action. Two words from *Gita* specifically influenced his political actions – '*aparigraha*' (non-possession) and '*sambhava*' (equability). '*Aparigraha*' meant that Gandhi agreed to jettison his material wants, which cramps the style of the spirit, and also helps shake off the bonds of money, property and sex. And 'equability' meant that he agreed to remain unruffled by pain or pleasure, victory or defeat, and worked without considering success or failure, that is, without hankering after the fruit of action.

In changing history, Gandhi was the first individual who used non-violence, not only at the individual and personal level but also in dealing with social, economic and political action. He explained "I saw that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way. Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others, but voluntarily borne by oneself".

Gandhi, who was deeply influenced by the *Bhagvad Gita*, and often described as a saint, changed the map of India. He took us from the world of science and technology, from the lust of power and profit, to the spirit of simplicity and saintliness and of renunciation with which India was, and still is familiar.

In his struggle in South Africa, when Gandhi was only about 24-25 years old, he experienced violence on roads, trains and buses. At the Petermaritzburg railway station Gandhi was

violently and unceremoniously thrown out of his first class train compartment with bag and baggage. Gandhi spent that night in great pain and anguish. This was the beginning of Gandhi's turning inwards, and as he acknowledged years later, this painful experience was the most creative and spiritual awakening in his life. This experience turned into a passionate cause for human dignity and justice, and it led him to discovering inner peace and tranquility.

In order to move towards building a peaceful and a sustainable future, we will need to awaken the inner spirituality of people and of communities. We believe the Earth Charter will help bring together science and spirituality to serve the Earth and its living creatures.

Sir Radhakrishnan, a philosopher and India's first President, looking back at our history pointed out "the greatest in the story of man on earth is not his material achievements, the empires built and broken, but the growth of the soul from age to age in its search for truth and goodness. Those who take part in the adventure of the soul secure an enduring place in history of human culture. Time has discredited heroes as easily as it has forgotten anyone else. But the saints remain".

Hinduism and Environment: A Way of Life

Hindus regard everything about them as pervaded by divine presence. The rivers, mountains, lakes, animals, flora and fauna, are all manifestations of God, and therefore there is a deep respect and gratitude felt towards nature.

In the *Vedas*, *Mahabharat*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas* and other religious books, man has been forbidden from exploiting nature and to recognize that divinity prevails in all natural elements, including trees, plants and animals.

India is a vast network of sacred places. There are sacred rivers, sacred mountains, sacred trees and plants, and sacred cities. There has also been a long tradition of maintaining sacred groves in many places in many states. In Rajasthan, a few centuries ago, it is said, that the King sent his men to cut trees for use in his palace. The village women hugged the trees to prevent their cutting. The story goes that about two hundred women were 'cut' and killed hugging trees before the King stopped! And even now a few years ago when a private sport agency sent their men to cut the trees women resorted to hugging the trees when the agents arrived. The *Chipko* movement – clinging to trees – has spread in many parts of India, and in other parts of the world as well.

The forest groves nurtured by villagers are looked upon as habitations of the gods. These groves also influence the spiritual and ethical behaviour of communities.

Most of the rivers in India are used as major 'pilgrimages'. The Ganges is especially sacred and used by the Hindu world – as also by others – to visit her banks, to sing, to pray, to be healed, and to be connected with their gods. At the famous *Kumbh mela* every year, where millions come from all over India, where the Ganges connects with the *Jamuna* and the

invisible *Saraswati*, people pay their homage, and to pray for their healing, their sicknesses, as also to seek mercy and compassion from the gods. These pilgrims believe Mother *Ganga* will take care of them.

The mountains too are treated as sacred. Many parts of the Himalayas are sacred sites, and millions of pilgrims also go to these centers with great devotion.

Mount *Kailash*, one of the peaks in the Himalayan region is considered especially sacred where over a billion people from India, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan, visit every year. The pilgrims view Mt. *Kailash* as a divine dwelling place of God and Goddess *Parvati*!

The whole emphasis of the present as also of the ancient Hindu religious practices is that human beings cannot separate themselves from their natural surroundings, because Earth has the same relationship with man as that of mother with her child.

Earth Charter and Sacredness

The Earth Charter is a document and a philosophy whose time has come.

When humanity reaches a new low history has shown that someone or something happens. With the despair and degradation that accompanied colonialism, Gandhi happened in India, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Both Gandhi and Nelson Mandela changed the map of the world.

With the Earth and its people in deep degradation, the Earth Charter has happened. The Earth Charter is a document which makes an appeal to humanity to move in the direction of sustainable living, of moral and ethical living, of peaceful and compassionate living, and of pursuing technologies with a human face.

Most changes that have altered the course of history began with individuals who by their example and actions did what many thought impossible. Underlying each one is a moral conviction and a fearlessness that refuses to be subdued.

Gandhi changed the map of the world. His life was rooted in India's religious concerns with a passionate search for truth and a profound reverence of life, the ideal of non-attachment, and readiness to sacrifice all for the knowledge of God. And he pointed out 'for me there is no politics devoid of religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death trap because they kill the soul'.

The religious spirit in India is widespread. There are millions of people who move around as pilgrims, as *swamis*, as *yogis* in search of God. And there are thousands of '*ashrams*' (religious, spiritual abodes), which people select to join in their search of peace and of God.

India has many many spiritual institutions with membership of millions, serving people in many ways – education, hospitals, health services, etc. and above all sharing their knowledge, and their spirituality. Sri Sathya Sai Baba's work is spread through 8000 Centers in India, and several hundreds abroad. The Sai Baba's institutions are not in pursuit of promoting religion, but in promoting 'love' and 'service' for others. One of Sai Baba's saying "Love all, Serve all.... Forget the harm that anyone has done to you and forget the good that you have done to others".

Another example is Pandurang Shastri, a *Gita* teacher, whose work is a movement of human transformation. The movement is about growth in self-knowledge, a knowledge that links 'self' to divinity. It is rooted in the idea that God is within us, and works with us. The best way of offering our gratitude to God is through offering of our 'efficiency' to Him as a devotional act. *Swadhyaya* literally means the study of knowledge and discovery of the self.

The *Swadhyaya* movement has spread in many parts of India and has a membership of about 150 million people all over the country and growing.

Pandurang Shastri's movement has helped people in agriculture, health care, better drainage, spreading of education, etc. In one of the drought years in Gujrat the devotees of Pandurang Shastri, with devotional service, helped recharge 94000 wells and rebuilt 500 ponds in a year!

Veerabhadra Misra is a '*mahant*' a priest in one of the largest temples in Benares, as also a Professor of Engineering in the Benares University. He is deeply concerned about the Ganges and suggests "the western approach will not work here. You will need to use a different language and a different relationship with the Ganges. Life is like a river. One bank is the '*vedas*' and the other bank includes science and technology – we need to pay attention to both banks".

The Ramakrishna Mission, a spiritual organization started by Swami Vivekanand in 1897 has attracted millions of professional people to serve communities. Swami Vivekanand, as a young man, traveled all over the country without a name, as an unknown beggar sleeping in stables and on the roadside with beggars and lepers. The 'pilgrimage' helped him to understand the deep poverty and despair of India's poor, as also their deep spirituality. The Ramakrishna Mission besides about 100 Centers in India, have many Centers in USA, as also in other parts of the world.

There are many many religious and spiritual movements all over India, serving the needs of people and communities. Religion as practiced in India need not be a retreat from the world.

There are millions of institutions in our lives that promote religious and spiritual and service actions for communities and for people that need their services. Gandhi had said 'My Life is My Message'. So too is the message from these millions of 'spiritual' people and institutions.

If we wish to promote the vision of the Earth Charter, and help build a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century, we need to make the religious and spiritual organizations as our partners as also a part of our agenda.

And we need to be the change we want others to be.

C) “The Earth Charter and Religion” by Joan Anderson

Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and the Earth Charter

There are a number of levels on which there is a good “fit” between the SGI and the Earth Charter, both in terms of underlying principles and modes of development and implementation. The SGI is a global network of ordinary citizens linked by a shared vision of creating a better future for all Earth’s inhabitants; the religious philosophy of Buddhism has always stressed that the reform of the inner life of the individual is the essential basis for any effort to improve social conditions; and the multicultural nature of our movement means that dialogue is deeply imbedded in its fabric. All these factors have made it very natural for many SGI members worldwide to find resonance with the ideals and objectives of the Earth Charter—the search for a shared ethical basis for a better world.

In terms of concrete action, the SGI and its members have been actively engaged in promoting the Earth Charter and putting its principles into action on different planes: international, national, local, and individual. SGI, a lay Buddhist association, currently has around 12 million members around the world, of whom around 10 million are in Japan. Outside Japan, there are a total of 77 countries where there is an officially registered SGI organization. Each operates independently, and while the religious beliefs and practices of Nichiren Buddhism are common to all, programs of socially-engaged activities are developed in line with local priorities and expertise and not mandated from SGI centrally.

The activities carried out by local and national SGI organizations tend to fall into several broad thematic areas – peace education, environmental protection and education, human rights education and interfaith dialogue and collaboration. As faith practitioners our members share a commitment to social justice, but for the most part they are not specialists. Our activities tend to fall into the category of “public education” or awareness-raising/constituency-building. Exhibitions have been one popular form of activity, often linked to seminars, workshops or lectures.

At the international level, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has promoted the Earth Charter repeatedly in his annual peace proposals issued on January 26 to mark SGI Day. He also contributed comments and feedback twice during the drafting process. His leadership has been symbolically important to SGI’s continuing involvement in the Earth Charter movement. In addition to references to the Earth Charter in the peace proposals, he also authored a proposal on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the run-up to the

WSSD; in this he referred specifically to the importance of the Earth Charter both as a vision and as an educational tool for the Decade. In articles and editorials on the theme of ESD he has repeatedly made reference to the Charter.

The availability of educational resources has also encouraged respective SGI organizations to become involved. The video “A Quiet Revolution,” which was produced by the Earth Council in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP and SGI, while initially not explicitly linked to the Earth Charter, has been frequently used in conjunction with events and activities related to the Charter. This film has been translated into numerous languages, been awarded at several film festivals, and shown on national TV stations in many countries. It continues to be in very high demand for educational purposes. A new 6-language DVD version has been produced which directly links the film to the Charter.

The exhibition “Seeds of Change: The Earth Charter and Human Potential,” created in partnership with the Earth Charter Initiative for the WSSD, has also been an important resource. This exhibition has been translated into Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Italian and Spanish and shown in many different venues around the world, often in partnership with other organizations and in conjunction with seminars on how people can contribute to sustainability in their own lives and communities. Because this exhibition was designed with ordinary citizens in mind, it has been demonstrably successful in inspiring individuals to believe that they can do something to “make a difference.”

The SGI Charter, adopted in 1994, articulates many of the same concerns as the Earth Charter, stating “We recognize that at no other time in history has humankind experienced such an intense juxtaposition of war and peace, discrimination and equality, poverty and abundance....that humanity’s egoism and intemperance have engendered global problems, including degradation of the natural environment and widening economic chasms....” The range of issues SGI is concerned with, and their interlinkages, make the Earth Charter a very convenient “junction box” which helps bring together these different issues in a way similar to the SGI Charter, but one which can more easily be shared with others. That these are ultimately ethical issues which require changes in fundamental human attitudes and behavior, away from selfishness and greed toward wisdom, responsibility, compassion and action for the sake of others, is a message which SGI members readily relate to, as it matches our basic belief that change starts from the individual undergoing a process of “human revolution” or inner-motivated change.

Two core principles of Buddhism generally make it easy for SGI members to relate to the Charter – respect for Earth and life in all its diversity, and the recognition of the interdependency and interconnectedness of all life. For us the lack of reference to a god-like figure in the Charter makes it easier for us to relate to it. The only problem sometimes is that our members might be over-enthusiastic in identifying how “Buddhist” the Earth Charter is. Because it so beautifully articulates our concerns, in internal background materials and training sessions we are always careful to emphasize “this is *not* a Buddhist document” and to stress that it is a strength of the Earth Charter movement that it brings together people and

groups from different faiths. In only isolated instances have our members reacted negatively to what they perceived as the promotion of a particular political agenda within the organization.

Since 1997, when the SGI-affiliated Boston Research Center for the 21st Century began consultations on the Benchmark Draft of the Earth Charter, and Mr. Ikeda first stressed the importance of the Earth Charter in his peace proposals, individual SGI members in many countries have been inspired by the vision articulated in the Charter. There are now two main e-networks linking these individuals. One links around 70 SGI members in 30 countries, and the other brings together key Earth Charter people within SGI-USA. Many of the latter groups have been actively involved with helping to organize local Earth Charter Community Summits. Between 2001 and 2004, SGI members in the U.S.A. and Scotland participated in a total of 19 such Summits.

In some cases almost the entire SGI organization in a particular country has become engaged, as in Canada and Taiwan, and in some cases such as Malaysia ongoing practical projects such as recycling have been linked to Earth Charter activities. SGI Hong Kong has a regular column in its publication devoted to the Earth Charter. In June 2005, the SGI Canada Vancouver Earth Charter Youth Committee was one of several groups awarded the City of Vancouver's "Mayor's Environmental Achievement Award." SGI-Italy has developed a Programme of innovative youth forums and "talk shows" where young people meet in small groups and use the Charter as a tool for reflection on their real-life concerns.

However, it is maybe at the individual level that the Charter has affected people most deeply. One SGI member who created a bilingual school in Beijing made the Earth Charter the ethical foundation for the school. Another is creating an Earth Charter-based learning center for sustainable development in rural France and a couple of SGI Earth Charter activists in Scotland are creating a social enterprise called "Action for Change" which will support the UN decade for ESD through promoting the message that individual action makes a difference. Its toolkit will include the use the Earth Charter, visual media and Green Mapping techniques to educate people about their own potential to affect positive change. Such grassroots initiatives may well be where the most sustained and direct impact of SGI's support of the Earth Charter is felt.

This scattered response is partly indicative of the autonomous nature of SGI organizations around the world. Another reason is that in some cases the senior leadership of the SGI organizations has not yet fully grasped the potential significance of the Earth Charter. It is not always easy to quickly understand its vision and purpose.

As SGI organizations I believe we could do more to promote the Charter internally within our own membership. As faith groups we have an unusual capacity to reach the grassroots, the "ordinary people" whose actions and basic attitudes create the future. More also could be done generally within the Earth Charter movement to capitalize on this outreach potential within religious congregations. Another area which could be strengthened both within SGI

and more broadly is use of the Earth Charter at interfaith events as it lends itself so well to the process of identifying common concerns about the state of humanity and the Earth. It is important to make efforts to include indigenous perspectives in such activities.

It is very significant that groups representative of all the world's major religious traditions are actively promoting the Charter amongst their memberships and this provides an important starting point for the process of building bridges and recognizing common agendas which should be more deliberately built upon.

We feel that the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development also offers important possibilities for learning and collaboration and would like to see the faith groups which are already active in the Earth Charter movement come together to discuss how we can bolster ESD efforts and awareness and use of the Earth Charter during the Decade. SGI has been an active participant at CSD and parallel activities for the past few years. Most recently, during CSD13, SGI worked with the Bahá'í, the National Council of Churches and other faith based groups to promote involvement by religious groups in the Decade, as well as further use of the Earth Charter within this context.

SGI is committed to further deepening and developing its involvement in the Earth Charter movement and looks forward to increased collaboration with faith-based groups as well as other NGOs over the next five year period. This period will be decisive in determining to what extent the Earth Charter "takes off," becomes genuinely widely known and accepted and begins to fulfill its potential as a global rallying cry towards a more sustainable future.

Appendix I: Faith Groups that have Endorsed the Earth Charter

Australia

Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace
Christian Brothers, Presentation Sisters
& Friends for Justice,
Congregation of Christian Brothers
Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy
Diocese of Bathurst
Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart [Australia] Justice
and Peace Centre
Presentation Sisters, Christian Brothers and
Friends Justice Group
SGI Australia
Women and the Australian Church - WATAC

Brazil

Sisters of the Holy Cross, Area VI-Brazil and Peru

Canada

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice
Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE)
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood
Outreach Committee Salt Spring United Church
Parksville/Qualicum branch of Kairos:
Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
School Sisters of Notre Dame - Canada

Chile

Congregación Misionera Padres de San Columbano

China

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

Colombia

Vicariato Apostolico de Inirida

Costa Rica

Asociacion Cristiana de Jovenes de Costa Rica
Ministerio de Educación Pública

East Timor

Maryknoll Sisters

El Salvador

Maryknoll Mission Community

France

Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon
Soka Gakkai France (Lyon)
Soka Gakkai, Paris

Germany

Central Mission of Franciscans
Ecumenical Initiative One World (OeIEW)
Ökumenische Initiative Eine Welt
(Ecumenical One World Initiative)
Pax Christi - German Section

Guatemala

Maryknoll Sisters

Honduras

Hermanas de San Jose de Lyon

India

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Holy Angels
Holy Cross Convent
Institute of the Franciscan
Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon
EFICOR, India

Indonesia

MADIA (Masyarakat Dialog Antar Agama)

International Organizations

Congregation of the Sisters of
St. Joseph of Peace (400 members)
Council of the Parliament of the World's Religions
Pax Christi International
Pax Romana ICMICA
Roman Catholic Religious Congregation
the Society of the Divine Word
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and its 400 members
Soka Gakkai International

Italy

Divine Word Missionaries
Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Fratelli Minori di Sicilia
Society of the Holy Child Jesus Generalate
Soka Gakkai Italia

Lebanon

Soeurs de Saint Joseph de Lyon

Marshall Islands

Maryknoll Sisters Marshall Islands

Mauritius

SGIM, Mauritius

Mexico

Hermanas de San Jose de Lyon
Maryknoll Mission Association
of the Faithful Region
Maryknoll Sisters in Mexico

Netherlands

SGI - Nederland (Dutch Soka Gakkai International)

New Zealand

Cenacle Sisters

Nicaragua

Sisters of Maryknoll of St. Dominic, Nicaragua

Pakistan

Our Lady of the Rosary, Pakistan

Philippines

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary-JPIC
Holy Family of Bordeaux
Delegation of the Philippines
JPIC Office, Mission Congregation of
the Servants of the Holy Spirit
Maryknoll Sisters
Mission Congregation of the Servants
of the Holy Spirit - Rosary Province
Siervas de San Jose

Puerto Rico

Convento Jesus Mediador

South Africa

Provincial Synod of the Church
of the Province of South Africa

Spain

Misioneras Doctrina Cristiana

Switzerland

Oekumenische Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Kirche und Umwelt

Taiwan

Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhism Foundation

United Kingdom

Dornoch Firth Baha'i Circle
Norwich and Lynn Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends

United States

Burlington Friends Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
Church of the American Indian USA
Church of the Earth Nation, Inc.
Church of Y Tylwyth Teg - Welsh
Tradition in America
Coalition for Interfaith and Intercultural
Knowledge and Action
Congregation Justice Committee of
the Sisters of the Holy Cross
Congregation of St. Agnes
Leadership Team
Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross
Connecticut Regional of The Sisters
of Mercy (335 Members and Associates)
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael
Federation of Sisters of Charity
First Congregational Church - UCC (MA)
First Congregational Church
(plus 28 church members) (Illinois)
First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington
Great Lakes Region of Sisters of Charity, BVM
Green Fire - 7 Generations Ministry
Green Sanctuary Committee; Unitarian-
Universalist Church of Tallahassee, FL
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Institute Justice Team, Sisters of
Mercy of the Americas
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office
Wheaton Franciscans
Maryknoll Sisters
Maryknoll Mission Association
of the Faithful
Maryknoll Sisters
Medical Mission Sisters
Middlebury Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Middlebury, VT Area Clergy
Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception
National Board of Leadership Conference
of Women Religious
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Coalition of American Nuns
New England Yearly Meeting
of Friends (Quakers)

North Universalist Chapel Society
Northwest Quarterly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
Office of Justice & Peace, Archdiocese of Portland
Office of Justice and Peace, ST Augustine Diocese
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Pax Christi USA
Platte Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Prairiewoods: Franciscan Spirituality Center
Presbyterians for Restoring Creation
Rochester Zen Center
SGI-USA
SGI-USA Mid America Region
Sisters of St. Joseph of Corondelet - |
St. Paul Province - Justice Commission
Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine
Sisters of Charity Halifax
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
(aprox. 225 signatures)
sisters of charity of St. Augustine
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston
Sisters of Loretto and Comembers
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Regional Community of Detroit
Sisters of Mercy of Vermont
Sisters of Mercy, Northeast Justice Team
Sisters of Providence of
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the
Sisters of Saint Joseph
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Orange
Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius
Sisters of St. Francis of Savannah, MO
Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH
Sisters of St. Joseph
Sisters of St. Joseph of
Carondelet, Los Angeles
Sisters of St. Joseph of
Carondelet, St. Louis- Congregational
Leadership Team
Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange
Sisters of St. Joseph, Watertown, NY
Sisters of the Holy Names
of Jesus and Mary, Washington Province
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Soka Gakkai International - Mendocino, CA
District
South Starksboro Monthly Meeting of Friends
(Quakers)
St. Mary FaithJustice Ministry
State College Friends Meeting
Stow Conservation Trust

Unitarian Universalist
Association of Congregations
Unitarian Universalists
Unitarian Universalists for
Ethical Treatment of Animals
United States Leadership of Sister
of Notre Dame de Namur
Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk- US Province
Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ

Vermont Zen Center
Vicentian Sisters of Charity
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters
Wilderness Friends Meeting (Quaker)
World Pantheist Movement USA

Uruguay
Soka Gakkai Internacional del Uruguay