

Holy Wisdom

Peace: Showing that Others Matter!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Life is what you make it yes, but we must also feel connected to one another. Each of our humanity should matter to one another. We only exist through others and when others take into consideration that all people worldwide matter then we can say we made a difference! Therefore it is imperative that we continue to strengthen the partnerships; in order to provide resources, support, opportunities that will develop best practices internationally. Our goal is to stay connected as we achieve the greatest impact in the betterment of all people.

Secretary-General Focuses on role of Fathers for International Day of Families

15 May 2008 – Fathers can make a positive impact on the development of their children, but too many men have difficulty taking up the responsibility of fatherhood, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement today to mark the International Day of Families.

“Recent research has affirmed the positive impact of active involvement by fathers in the development of their children. “Mr. Ban said nothing that there is an increased emphasis in many countries on – “the father’s role as a co-parent, fully engaged in emotional and practical day-to-day aspects of raising children.”

But he added that challenges persist for fathers and for society in general. “Some fathers inflict domestic violence or even sexual abuse, devastating families and creating profound

physical and emotional scars in children. Others abandon their families outright and fail to provide. “He said that the HIV/AIDS crisis demonstrates the critical importance of sexual responsibility for fathers and all men.

The Secretary-General also spoke about the difficulties caused by migration – saying that fathers often face separation from their families. He added that some fathers may even be rejected by their children once they have moved to a new country.

Mr. Ban Called on families “to honor fathers for their important contributions to family life. And I call on all of us to commit ourselves to building a social environment that encourages and sustains a positive vision of fatherhood.”

Religious News: To Develop Unity – World Peace

Copenhagen (ENI). A number of Danish churches have praised an open letter published by 138 prominent Muslim scholars and have pledged to meet with leaders of Islam in Denmark to continue this exchange. The dean of Copenhagen cathedral, the Rev. Anders Gadegarard, told Ecumenical News International that he and the general secretary of the Danish National Council of Churches, Mads Christoffersen, sent a response on behalf of churches in Denmark to the Muslim scholars’ letter of October 2007 to church leaders around the world.

Nairobi (ENI). Jean –Louis Tauran, the president of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, has said religions should be prepared to ask difficult questions and he asserts it is unrealistic to live as if there was only one global faith. “Partners in the dialogue must be open to talk about those issues not often put on the table: religious liberty, freedom of conscience, reciprocity, conversion, religious extremism.”

New York (ENI). In a media-saturated culture, Pope BenedictXVI’s 15-20 April visit to the United States is being judged by whether it got “good reviews” and early reactions have been favorable, with commenter remarking that Benedict, who heads the worldwide Roman Catholic Church, addressed the issue of clergy sexual abuse head on. This was the face that the public saw much of the time, and seemed to warm to. However, there were other aspects to Benedict’s first official visit as pontiff to the United States. In his 18 Friday address to the United Nations in New York, the Pope appeared to align himself with those who say that there is a duty for international action in cases where countries are unable to protect their citizens or, still worse, have committed acts of violence against them.

Bangalore (ENI). Hundreds of people have attended the funeral of Roman Catholic priest active in campaigning for human rights in Sri Lanka, who was killed in bob blast. The priest, the Rev. Mariampillai Xavier Karunaratnam, died when a roadside bomb exploded as he was driving home after conducting Mass on 20 April in Sri Lanka’s northern Vanni region. This area of the country is under the control of rebels seeking autonomy for Tamil-majority areas in the north and east of the island.

the setting up of well-resourced “deradicalisation” centres in key cities throughout the

United Kingdom. The Quilliam Foundation, launched in London on 22 April, recommends that the centres, independent of government, should be staffed by mainstream Muslim scholars in order to counter extremist ideology with the insights of traditional, pluralistic Islam.

Rome (ENI). Catholicos Karekin II of the Armenian Apostolic Church, visiting Pope Benedict XVI in Rome, has spoken of the “genocide” suffered by his compatriots in the Ottoman empire, and said that those with power should ensure that justice prevails. “We... appeal to all nations and lands to universally condemn all genocides that have occurred throughout history and those that continue through the present day, Karekin said in St Peter’s Square on 7 May, where he had been invited by Pope Benedict to speak at the pontiff’s general audience.

Jerusalem (ENI). Church groups in about 100 countries will join together in demonstrating their concern for peace in the Middle East as part of a global week of action for Middle East Peace led by the World Council of Churches, and supported by Roman Catholic groups. “The action of international churches makes it more encouraging for local churches in their struggle for freedom and human dignity,” said Yusef Daher, executive secretary of the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre. “It also encourages us to do more locally.

Oxford, Ohio (ENI). Leaders of the World Jewish Congress have endorsed a call by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia for more dialogue and Muslims between Jews, Christians and Muslims worldwide to reinforce common values among the Abrahamic faiths. “It is the duty of all religions to restore respect for humanity.” The WJC said in a statement on 27 May. “Such an initiative demonstrates optimism that dialogue involving representatives of different faiths can help the peoples of the world during difficult times. Discussion can help in finding ways to approach the crisis of ethical values facing our societies.

Bangalore (ENI). The tiny Christian community in Pakistan’s troubled North West Frontier Province is living in terror, says a Pakistan church leader, despite the safe release of 16 Christians kidnapped by a suspected Islamic militia group. Christians are being victimized and harassed in the struggle here,” Humphrey Peter, secretary of the synod of the Church of Pakistan, told Ecumenical News International. He was speaking from Peshawar the province’s capital, as he confirmed the release of the detainees, who had been kidnapped on 21 June. Peter said militants from “The Army of Islam” had taken the Christians at gunpoint from a prayer meeting at the residence of a fellow believer near Peshawar, and released them next day.

Rome (ENI). Pope Benedict XVI has appealed to Christians to learn from the teachings of St. Paul. Benedict described the apostle’s writings as those, “in which are rooted the reasons for the unity of the disciples of Christ”. The Pope made his remarks at a ceremony at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, at the beginning of year-long celebrations to mark the second millennium since the birth of St. Paul. The Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I and representatives of other churches joined the Pope at the ceremony. According to tradition, St Paul was beheaded in Rome near the

basilica, which is said to contain the remains of the apostle, who was famous for his missionary journeys around the Mediterranean and the Middle East to spread Christianity in the years following the death of Jesus.

Bangalore, India (ENI). A joint forum of Buddhist, Christian are trying our best to make our voiced Hindu minorities in Bangladesh is lobbying quietly for the restoration of a secular constitution that was abolished 20years ago making Islam the state religion in the Muslim-majority nation. "We are trying our best to make our voices heard," Nirmal Rozario, organizing secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, told Ecumenical News International on 8 July from Dhaka.

World News – Partnership:

Afghanistan Making Significant Progress in Mine Clearance, Reports UN Official

More than 38,000 anti-personnel mines have been cleared in the past six months across Afghanistan one of the most heavily mined countries in the world- representing 10 per cent of the total number cleared in the past 18 years, a senior United Nations official said today.

Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, and more than four million Afghans are living in mine-contaminated areas.

Haider Reza, Programme Director of the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA), <[http://www.unama-afg.org/-lastest news/2008/08july21 - Afghaistan-clear-landmines.html](http://www.unama-afg.org/-lastest%20news/2008/08july21%20-%20Afghaistan-clear-landmines.html)>.told a news conference in Kabul today that the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan has cleared 38,297 anti-personnel mines, 419 anti-tank mines and 957,362 explosive remnants of war so far this year.

In addition, some 65,361,363 square metres of land across the strife-torn nation has been cleared.

As a party to the global anti-landmine treaty, known as the Ottawa Convention, Afghanistan has committed itself to clear all of its landmines by 2013.

In addition, the Afghanistan Compact has set a target of reducing all contaminated land from landmines and explosive remnants of war by 70 per cent by 2011.

Launched in January 2006, the Compact is the framework for partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community to help bolster the war-torn country's security, economic development and counter-narcotics efforts.

Mr. Reza credits much of the recent success to community based de-mining and mine risk education programmes. Community based de-mining has been particularly useful in areas where there is conflict and regular de-miners cannot operate. By training local people to carry out de-mining activities, the mine-clearing process can continue and locals can

benefit from the employment such activities offer.

“With these new approaches, Afghanistan will be able to meet the Ottawa Convention and Afghanistan Compact benchmarks,” said Mr. Reza.

Over 760,000 men, women and children received mine risk education training in the first six months of this year. Together, mine clearance and mine risk education have helped decrease the number of mine victims to a record low of 24 people across the nation in June 2008.

Telskuf (ENI). The Ghassan family had only 24 hours to leave Mosul, a city in Iraq about 400 kilometres North West of Baghdad. They were able to take only what they could hastily gather together. A letter had been slipped under their apartment door with the short sentence, “I’ll get you, if you stay.” On the page there was a drawing of a kalashnikov rifle plus a warning that the family had one day to get out. With her husband Fathel, their three children and five grandchildren, Fawziyya Ghassan, aged 58, set out for Telskuf, in semi-autonomous Kurdistan in Northern Iraq. She hoped she and her family would be safe there but her husband survived only six days. His heart gave up, unable to cope with the troubles and turmoil. Now, the family has to get by on its own. The Ghassans were Christians, and this was their undoing.

Tokyo (ENI). A Japanese pastor is demanding an apology from the government in Tokyo to the Ainu people following a parliamentary resolution in June to support the group’s recognition as an indigenous people. “The government has for so long not recognized the Ainu as an indigenous people, and neglected the Ainu’s voices,” the Rev. Tadao Miura, director of the Ainu People information Centre of the United Church of Christ in Japan, said after the parliamentary resolution.

New York (ENI). John Mark Templeton, a man who first made his mark as a pioneer international investor, is being remembered in religious circles for commitment, later in life, to the most prominent prize in religion: the annual Templeton Prize. He also funded other projects related to the study of science and religion.

United Nations News

Human Dimension of Global Climate Change

Global climate change is now believed to be one of the major challenges facing mankind. The fourth assessment report of the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has unequivocally confirmed climate change as real, accelerating and human induced. The Stern Review has clearly spelled out the social and economic impact of climate change and the UNDP Human Development Report of 2007/2008 had warned us of the risk of unprecedented human development reversal during our lifetime, unless urgent and timely corrective measures are taken.

As climate change accelerates we are likely to witness an increase in the frequency and

magnitude of storms, flooding and droughts. This will have serious implications for agriculture, water resources, industry, human health and human settlements. Although all countries will be affected by climate change, developing countries, especially the Least Developed Countries (LDC), and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where greater poverty and physical vulnerabilities limit the capacity to act will be the most seriously harmed.

The climate debate to date has been primarily scientific in nature. The human impact of climate change has been largely overlooked. However, there is growing consensus now that climate change poses the most immediate and far-reaching threat to human security and sustainable development. It is widely accepted that by compromising the environment, climate change poses a direct threat to access to freshwater, food security, cultural continuity, land and property security, economic growth and the ability to attain an adequate standard of living, physical and mental health, and the right to life itself. In the most extreme scenario, as stated in the recent IPCC predictions, sea-level resulting from a 5 degree Celsius rise in the global temperature would submerge and lead to the total extinction of low-lying sovereign States like Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and the Maldives.

It is clear then that the linkages between climate change and human security are starting to become more relevant as social and human consequences due to environmental degradation become more apparent. At its seventh session in March 2008 the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution formally recognizing this linkage. The resolution is seen as a vital stepping stone towards increased global awareness about the immediate and compelling human face of climate change. The resolution requested the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in consultation with and taking into account the views of States, other relevant international organizations and intergovernmental bodies, including the intergovernmental panel on Climate Change, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other stakeholders, to conduct a detailed analytical study of the relationship between climate change and human rights.

The United Nations is in the process of strengthening the partnerships with other NGO's so they can address the multiple issues that affect the lives of million of women, men and children in all regions of the world. The goal of the United Nations is to help reach solutions that will make tangible differences in people lives.

The United Nations is an intergovernmental body made up of 192 Member states that often act in their national interest. On the other hand the NGO's are motivated by global, regional or community interests. In this sense the hope is that governments and NGO's will naturally complement each other - if they work together. Therefore the United Nations has recognized that they must continue as they have from the founding of the United Nations, to be creative in the ways that they bring the voices and skills of civil society closer to the work of the UN – at the global, regional and country levels.

The United Nations is ready to partnership with the Department of Public Information to

continue to provide the information and access needed to work with the constituencies and communities around the world!

In the past the number of successes has been based on building support for the United Nations as they continue to expand their old partnerships and make new ones.

Some of the Successes in the past year to name a few was: Last Year's DPI-NGO Conference on "Climate Change". The conference brought together more than 450 NGO's from more than 60 countries and examined the most pressing issue before the United Nations that year. The Conference 's outcomes was a declaration, which included action plans to combat climate change and the action plan was presented to the General Assembly High- Level Meeting on Climate Change.

Another success was the observance this year on April 2, 2008 of the first ever World Autism Awareness Day, designated by the General Assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

61ST Annual DPI/NGO Conference, September 3-5 2008, Reaffirming Human Rights for All: The Universal Declaration at 60, UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, FRANCE

The three-day gathering of NGO's is organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI) in partnership with the NGO/DPI Executive committee as well as NGO's which have consultative status with the United Nations

The goal of the conference is to provide a forum for diverse partnerships including

- Youth Activists
- Human Rights Activists from all over the world
- Education and Information technology experts
- Government, Academia and UN Representatives
- Citizen Activists and Citizen Journalist

The United Nations goal is to address several issues simultaneously reaching out to new and different partners and, to involve them in building and sustaining the interest in the work that needs to be done to ensure that they are working together in the Road Ahead to ensure that the issues that affect people all around the world are addressed and have an impact for the betterment of their lives.

Contact: Co-Chairs Media Committee 61st Annual DPI/NGO Conference
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Together – We Can Make A Difference!!

Ignatius University Graduate Program in Politics psychology, Peace Studies/Conflict
Management Organizational Management/Diplomacy

Announcements:

The following PHD Students are preparing for their Dissertations!

1. Isie Akapn
2. Arlaana Black
3. Edmond Charley
4. Nicole Pellegrino

For further information on the various programs contact:

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United Nations Affairs – Syrian Orthodox Church In America