

A conference on Religious Education for Dialogue and Peace

Please Post

How Believers Account for Others' Beliefs

April 4-9, 1989

*To initiate a nineteen-
volume series of texts and
documents to overcome
ignorance and prejudice
based on a lack of
knowledge of our
neighbors' beliefs.*

February 92

Sponsored by...

University of Minnesota
Minneapolis
Saint John's University
Collegeville
Luther Northwestern Theological
Seminary, Saint Paul
Temple University
Philadelphia
Project Tandem, Incorporated
Minneapolis

*Mable Davis
Augustine Calde
16 x 17 February 92*

BACKGROUND

In 1981 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. Twenty years of complex discussion and intense debate preceded the Declaration's adoption.

The problem, as with every statement of political principle, is to create the conditions in which the ideal can become real. Every day's newspaper makes clear there is still much to be done before all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief are eliminated.

Scholarship by itself certainly cannot solve the problem, but any solution that is not undergirded and reinforced by careful research and thought will not last. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (43rd Session, 1987), acknowledging the role of learning in implementing the Declaration, has invited "the United Nations University and other academic and research institutions to undertake programmes and studies on the encouragement of understanding, tolerance, and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief."

Temple University in Philadelphia and the United Nations University in Tokyo have responded to the Commission's invitation by a project called "Religious Education for Dialogue and Peace" (REDAP) that will launch an international education curriculum. Scholars who identify with a particular religious tradition but are at the same time committed to the canons of critical scholarship will be asked, in company with others, some of whom identify with the tradition and some of whom are expert in the tradition but do not identify with it, to prepare both a volume about that religious tradition and an accompanying volume of selected texts to illustrate the tradition's doctrines and practices. Harper & Row will publish the series. There will be a total of nineteen volumes: an introductory book on methodologies, then nine sets of two volumes each on major traditions: 1) Introduction: Methodologies; 2) Primal Religions; 3) Judaism; 4) Christianity; 5) Islam; 6) Indian Religions; 7) Buddhism; 8) Chinese and Japanese Religions; 9) New Religious Movements; 10) Ideologies (e.g., Marxism).

Project Tandem, Inc., a nonsectarian, nonprofit corporation begun in 1985 and affiliated with the University of Minnesota, is the only organization in the world focusing solely on promotion of the 1981 United Nations Declaration. Project Tandem, with sponsorship from the University of Minnesota Law School and the United Nations Association of Minnesota, organized in 1986 an International Conference in Minneapolis on ways to promote the Declaration. More than 125 persons from thirty countries attended. Project Tandem is organizing a Second International Conference to be held in Warsaw in May, 1989. Sponsors of this second conference are the University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts, the Institute of State and Law of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, and the World Federation of United Nations Associations.

At the suggestion of Project Tandem, three Minnesota academic institutions — a Protestant seminary, Luther Northwestern; a Roman Catholic liberal arts college, Saint John's; and the University of Minnesota — have arranged a conference, **How Believers Account for Others' Beliefs**, to be held April 4-9, 1989, to which the authors of the REDAP volumes (17 United States, 3 Asia, 3 Europe, 2 Canada, 1 Africa), the Vice-Rector of United Nations University, and editorial representatives of Harper & Row are invited. The conference will give all the authors an opportunity to meet one another and discuss the overall shape of the project, but the aim of the gathering goes far beyond the mechanics of collaboration.

Each of the three participating Minnesota academic institutions will, on its own grounds, host the conference for an entire day. Several REDAP authors will make presentations addressing the following question:

How does the tradition about which I am writing account for the fact that there are many other religious traditions whose adherents are as firmly committed to them as I am to mine?

Clarity about the many ways in which religions deal intellectually with the fact that there are other religions would significantly enhance the value of interreligious dialogue. In the interests of making such help widely available, the papers presented at the conference will be published.

Beyond the traditional presentation of papers, however, Luther Northwestern, Saint John's, and the University of Minnesota have organized programs that will suggest to the REDAP authors, from the experience and concerns of a theological seminary with a strong confessional identity, a religiously committed college operated by a monastic order, and a large public secular university, questions to consider and angles of approach to the series of books. A core group of nine scholars (three from each institution) will meet regularly and often with the REDAP authors during the conference. This is not a conference that would be the same no matter where it was held; the character of the three host institutions is an integral part of the theme and design.

The program on the three campuses will be open to faculty and students, and there will be public forums for discussion of the problems and opportunities presented by religious pluralism.

The conference, the results of which will be reported at Warsaw in May, continues a tradition of Minnesota engagement with the U.N. Declaration, and establishes a framework for cooperation among various types of Minnesota academic institutions.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap, age, veteran status or sexual orientation.

AGENDA

This is a draft agenda subject to change.

Tuesday, April 4, 1989

Nolte Center, Room 140, 315 Pillsbury Drive S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Morning

Arrival and Registration

Authors, REDAP Executive Committee and consulting legal and secondary educators arrive. They will be lodged at the Days Inn, 2407 University Avenue SE., Minneapolis, (612) 623-3999.

1:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Leonard Swidler, Professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Professor Iwao Munakata, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

The authors and REDAP Executive Committee will meet each other for the first time. They will be joined by three scholars from each of the sponsoring schools. Professor Leonard Swidler and the representative from Harper & Row will present an overview of the project and what the conference is intended to accomplish.

2:45

Break

3:00

Presentation of Paper on Methodology

Professors Leonard Swidler, Paul Mojzes and Iwao Munakata will make the opening presentation on methodology.

5:00

Reception

6:00

Dinner, Nolte Center

7:00

Open Discussion

The evening will be left open for continuing discussion of the paper on methodology or for entertainment.

Wednesday, April 5, 1989

Rare Book Room, Law Center, University of Minnesota - West Bank, Minneapolis

8:30 a.m.

Welcome

Fred Lukermann, Professor and Dean, College of Liberal Arts, will welcome conference participants to the University of Minnesota.

8:45

Critique of Methodology

REDAP authors, REDAP Executive Committee, and scholars from sponsoring schools will critique the Swidler/Mojzes paper. Other faculty, students and the general public will be invited to listen to the discussion.

10:00

Break

10:15

Critique of Methodology

The critique of the paper on methodology will continue for the rest of the morning.

12:30 p.m.

Open Discussion

The last half hour of the morning session will be open for comments and/or critiques from the larger audience.

1:00

Lunch, HHH Cafeteria

2:30

Presentation by University of Minnesota

Professor and Dean Fred Lukermann will preside over a presentation by scholars from the University to the REDAP group on ways in which secular disciplines view the topic of the conference.

4:00

Break

4:15

Open Discussion

The REDAP group and presenting scholars from the University of Minnesota will participate in open discussion of the afternoon presentation.

5:30

Reception

6:30

Dinner, Campus Club, University of Minnesota

8:00

Open

The evening will be left open either for a public dialogue between REDAP scholars on the campus of the University of Minnesota or for entertainment.

Thursday, April 6, 1989

Centenary XV Room, Q264, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota

7:30 a.m.

Buses leave Days Inn to take participants to Saint John's University.

9:00

Welcome

Br. Dietrich Reinhart, OSB, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, welcomes the REDAP participants to Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict and presents an overview of the day.

9:15

Presentation of Papers

Three papers on Hinduism, Buddhism and the Chinese and Japanese religions will be delivered to the REDAP group. Faculty, students and the general public will listen to the presentations and following critique.

10:45

Break

11:00

Critique of Papers

REDAP authors, REDAP Executive Committee, and scholars from the three sponsoring schools will critique the papers.

12:30 p.m.

Open Discussion

The last half hour of the morning session will be open for comments and/or critique from the larger audience.

1:00

Lunch, Alumni Lounge

1:45

Tour of the Hill Monastic Microfilm Library (optional)

2:30

Presentation and Discussion on Dialogue and Peace within Monastic Culture

Abbot Jerome Theisen, OSB, and faculty from Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict will make presentations on how monastic culture accounts for religious and intellectual pluralism. Discussion will concentrate on the role of women, non-monastics, non-Christians and non-believers within monastic culture.

5:00

Reception, Great Hall

5:30

Dinner

6:50

Monastic Evening Prayer (optional)

7:45

Public Discussion on Dialogue and Peace within Monastic Culture

Faculty and student body of Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict along with external observers will initiate a discussion of the central issue arising from the afternoon session.

9:00

Bus back to Minneapolis

Friday, April 7, 1989

*Luther Northwestern Seminary, 2481 Como Avenue,
Saint Paul*

7:45 a.m.

Buses leave for St. Paul from Days Inn Hotel

8:15

Welcome

President David Tiede and Bishop David Preus of Luther Northwestern Seminary welcome the REDAP participants and present an overview of the day.

8:30

Presentation of Papers

Three papers on Judaism, Christianity and Islam will be presented to the REDAP group. Faculty, students and the general public will be welcomed to listen to presentations and the following critique.

10:00

Chapel and Reception

10:30

Critique of Papers

REDAP authors, REDAP Executive Committee, and scholars from the three sponsoring schools will critique the papers.

12:30 p.m.

Open Discussion

The last half hour of the morning session will be open for comments and/or critique from the larger audience.

1:00

Lunch

2:30

A Presentation by Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary

Rev. David Preus will preside over a presentation by faculty from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary on ways in which they view the topic of the conference.

4:00

Break

4:15

Open Discussion

The REDAP group and presenting scholars from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary will participate in open discussion of the afternoon presentation.

5:30

Break

6:00

Dinner, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary

7:00

Bus back to Minneapolis

Saturday, April 8, 1989

*Earle Brown Center, University of Minnesota,
St. Paul Campus*

8:00 a.m.

Bus leaves for Earle Brown Center, University of Minnesota

8:30

Welcome

Professor Paul Mojzes presents an overview of the day.

8:45

Presentation of Papers

Three papers on primal religions, ideologies and new religions will be delivered to the REDAP group. Faculty, students and the general public will be welcomed to listen to presentations and the following critique.

10:15

Break

10:30

Critique of Papers

REDAP authors, REDAP Executive Committee, and scholars from the three sponsoring schools will critique the papers.

12:30 p.m.

Open Discussion

The last half hour of the morning session will be open for comments and/or critique from the larger audience.

1:00

Lunch

2:30

A Presentation by Consulting Scholars

4:00

Break

4:15

Closure

The REDAP group will participate in a closing discussion.

5:30

Bus back to Minneapolis

6:00

Dinner, Open

Sunday, April 9, 1989

Days Inn, Commons Room, Minneapolis, Minnesota

8:30 a.m.

Brunch Meeting

REDAP authors and the REDAP Executive Committee will meet together for breakfast and a morning meeting to summarize decisions made on methodology, writing schedules and other matters relating to the REDAP project.

11:00

Checkout at Days Inn

REDAP authors and the REDAP Executive Committee check out of Days Inn and depart Minneapolis.

AUTHORS

Judaism

Daniel Pollsh, Temple Beth El, Birmingham, Michigan
Eugene Fisher, Washington, D.C.

Christianity

Leonard Swidler, Religion Department, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Demetrios Constantelos, History Department, Stockton State College, Pomona, New Jersey
Melanie May, Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Illinois

Islam

Khalid Duran, Rockville, Maryland
Raffat Hassan, Louisville, Kentucky
David Kerr, Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut

Indian Religions

Kana Mitra, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Nikky Singh, Colby College, Waterville, Maine
Klaus Klostermaler, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Buddhism

David Chappell, East West Center, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii
Bibhuti Yadav, Religion Department, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Chatsumaru Kabilsingh, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand

Chinese and Japanese Religions

Julla Ching, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Iwao Munakata, Sociology Department, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan
Paul Watt, Columbia University, New York, New York

Primal Religions

Wande Abimbola, Nigeria
Joon Sik Chol, Seoul, South Korea
Sam D. Gill, Boulder, Colorado
John Mbiti, Burgdorf, Switzerland

Ideologies

Paul Mojzes, Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania
Zdenko Roter, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia

"New Religions"

Franklin Littell, Merion Station, Pennsylvania
Herbert Richardson, Graduate Centre for Religious Studies, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
William Deadwyler, Hare Krishna, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Publisher

John Loudon, Editor, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, California
Clayton E. Carlson, Vice President and Publisher, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, California

Popular Text Expert

Joseph Stoutzenberger, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania

Observing Scholars

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Neville Matthew, Washington
Donna Sullivan, New York

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