



Interfaith Council

History of the Interfaith Movement

"Henceforth the religions of the world will make war, not on each other, but on the giant evils that afflict mankind."

— Charles Bonney, 1893

World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago

The Interfaith Movement formally began at the first Parliament for World Religions in Chicago in 1893. Those who gathered had the understanding that there was a need for better communication and cooperation among religions across the globe. Since that time, there has been a global effort worldwide to bring together different religions in a hope to seek common ground.

The second Parliament did not gather again until 1993 to mark the centenary of the first. The year of 1993 was dedicated to inter-religious understanding and cooperation amongst many interfaith events around the world. As a result of the actions of that year, there are a number of local, national, and international interfaith organizations addressing a wide variety of issues and concerns today.

Since that time, there have been three more Parliament meetings. In March 2001 the International Interfaith Centre convened a meeting in Oxford that was attended by representatives from 14 of the international interfaith organizations. Together they agreed to create a calendar of events to enhance awareness of each other's activities, and to meet again in

Budapest in August 2002 to build upon this new networking relationship.

The meeting in Budapest took place in August 2002; the third was in September of 2003 in Oxford. The latest meeting was held at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain in July 2004.

"No human life together without a world ethic for the nations."

No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.

No peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions."

— Hans Kung,
Christian Theologian

Interfaith Council at Berry College

Berry College was founded in 1902 by the Christian visionary and philanthropist Martha Berry who believed that every student is entitled to an equal opportunity to learn. While Berry is rooted in and continues to uphold strong Christian values, the College upholds that people of all religious and cultural backgrounds are to be welcomed into the campus community.

Following in the steps of the Parliament for the World's Religions, and Martha Berry's vision for equal education for all, Berry College has created its own small organization for the support of different religions.

"The Interfaith Council exists to assist in wide-spread dialogue about the various dimensions of religious practice, belief, and faith in the Christian tradition and in others. We think some of the most powerful learning during the college years takes place outside the classroom. The IFC makes possible such learning on a continuing and organized basis."

—Scott Colley,
President of Berry College

"For me, the first step in following Christ today is to open oneself to the revelation of God in the other religions of the world. The Interfaith Council provides the context in which that can happen."

—David McKenzie
Methodist Pastor and Professor
of Religion at Berry College

Founded in the fall of 2003, the Interfaith Council is a group of faculty, administrators and students who work closely with the Chaplain's Office to help foster a welcoming environment at Berry College for

continued on back



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people of all faiths. It supports and promotes opportunities for people to learn about and participate in a variety of religious opportunities, both on campus and in the surrounding community. Many of its events over the past two years have included speeches by such prominent writers as Bishop Spong, Elaine Pagels, and Inés Talamantez. Through these and other on-going programs, the Interfaith Council seeks to foster an appreciation of multi-faith awareness on Berry's campus and throughout the Rome area.

“Serving on the Interfaith Council has allowed me to interact with and learn from people of various religious faiths, enriching my education and spirituality. The [Interfaith] council is important because it encourages love and appreciation of every human being, which is a virtue taught in all major religions.”

—Cary Sanders
Berry College student

“The Interfaith Council provides a welcoming environment for people of different religious backgrounds. Coming to a school where Christianity is the predominant faith can no doubt be intimidating for someone

who is not Christian. Those who are brave enough to enter into such a college should be welcomed and their faith should be celebrated. By being more open to new ideas and beliefs we have the potential to create a future of greater unity at Berry.”

—Kathleen McMahan
Berry College Student

The Interfaith Center

“The more you learn about other faith traditions, the better you can understand your own.”

—Dale McConkey
Berry College Chaplain

The Interfaith Center was dedicated by President Colley in 2003. Located in the East Mary lobby of the Ford Buildings at Berry College, the Center is open to any person or group who wishes to profess their faith. Open to all religions, the Center's goal is to promote a greater understanding and tolerance for the beliefs and practices of others. Therefore, the doors are always open and the room can be reserved for any religious group via Cathy Cauthen at ccauthen@berry.edu.

If you have questions about the Interfaith Council or would like to schedule an event, please feel free to contact the IFC chair, Jeffrey Lidke, at jlidke@berry.edu.

“Students at Berry hold many different beliefs; there are many ways to approach God. All religions hold common ideas about how to do good in the world. Interfaith is about looking for unity and working together.”

--Ellen Johnson
Professor English, Berry College

IFC MEMBERS 2004-2005

Faculty

Jeffrey Lidke, chair
Steve Bell
Wade Carpenter
Susan Logsdon-Conradson
Cecily Crow
Ellen Johnson
Anne Lewinson
David McKenzie

Administrators

Scott Colley, ex officio
Thomas E. Dasher, ex officio
Debbie Heida, ex officio
Krishna Dhir
Dale McConkey, ex officio
Gary Waters

Students

Robert Bice
David Fikis
Kathleen McMahan
David Moskovitz
Cary Sanders
Brent Simoneaux