



Kansas City's First Interfaith Conference

The Gifts of Pluralism

Help shape the future of faiths in the Kansas City area —

- teach ● learn ● connect ● celebrate

using the “Appreciative Inquiry” method of deepening relationships

A conference for everyone interested in Kansas City's religions and how they address today's environmental, personal, and social issues

Oct 27-28, 2001, Pembroke Hill School (State Line Campus)

Deepening our own faiths while learning about others

Conference Approaches

▶ **KANSAS CITY FOCUS.** This is the first truly multi-faith conference in the history of the Kansas City area. American Indian, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, Wiccan, Zoroastrian faiths are participating. In addition, the conference planning includes observers from major denominations with world headquarters in the Kansas City area. Without out-of-town speakers, we will discover who we are here and what we can become.

▶ **PARTICIPATION.** This is not a “listen-and-learn” conference. In many ways those who participate will shape the conference and its continuing impact on Kansas City.

▶ **ALL WELCOME.** The conference is open to anyone sincerely interested in strengthening our community through religious understanding.

▶ **RELEVANCE.** The conference brings the wisdom of the world's religious traditions to address environmental, personal, and social questions of our time, with Kansas City as our focus.

▶ **THE SPIRIT.** The conference arises from the experiences like that of the Interfaith Council, that learning about other faiths is a way of deepening one's own. There is no presumption equating the faiths—we place importance on appreciating each tradition in its own right and value the differences, even as we cherish our shared human kinship.

▶ **ORGANIZATION.** The conference is convened by the Kansas City **Interfaith Council**, formed in 1989. It is managed by the Council's hosting organization, **CRES**, a 501(c)(3) organization promoting understanding among peoples of all faiths. The conference is co-sponsored by **Kansas City Harmony**, the **NCCJ**, and **Spirit of Service**. The Learning Project and Hatebusters are also supporting this conference.

For Information

For program, schedule, registration, and other details, phone 913.649.5114, write Box 45414, KCMO 64171, or visit the conference web site, www.cres.org/gifts.

Expected Outcomes

Bringing together 300 people from every faith tradition, the Gifts of Pluralism Conference will build and deepen the sense of community in Greater Kansas City, leading to the following outcomes:

- Kansas Citians attain a heightened awareness of the many faiths honored here.
- Kansas Citians discover our own faiths refreshed by encounter with others.
- Opportunities for new partnerships are created, potentially including a new metro-wide alliance of faith communities.
- Employers are aware of and have access to new resources to support and enhance diversity in the workplace.
- Participants develop personal relationships that cross many boundaries, including religious, racial, age and geographic (state line).
- Through *Appreciative Inquiry*, participants develop listening and learning skills that enhance their ability to support religious diversity.
- Participants learn how the various faith traditions can help address environmental, personal and social issues of our time.
- A concluding *Joint Declaration* outlines future directions of religious cooperation in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Appreciative Inquiry

The conference uses a recently refined methodology called *Appreciative Inquiry* to affirm and build on the experiences and strengths of each participant by asking respectful questions which provide a context for getting to know and appreciate one another in ways that can be profoundly mov-