



# Many Paths

the monthly journal of

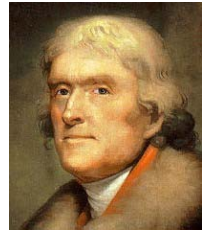
**CRES** — multi-faith community resource for exploring spirituality through civic involvement, teaching, consulting, and writing

WORLD FAITHS Center for Religious Experience and Study  
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staff@cres.org — cres.org

Our Page 1 essays introduce readers to aspects of specific faiths, compare and contrast how various faiths consider particular subjects, or present material those of any spiritual path may find helpful.

## American Public Spirituality

Americans have many reasons to be grateful for Thomas Jefferson, from his drafting of the Declaration of Independence, to the Louisiana Purchase (which includes what is now Kansas and Missouri), to his defense of religious liberty with a “wall of separation between church and state.”



Yet Jefferson was a child of the 18th Century Enlightenment which sought to classify all things as a way of understanding them. It created a category for religion divorced from other pursuits, just as philosophy split into science, mathematics, natural history, and other new disciplines.

To ensure that particular faiths were not favored or obstructed by government, liberals have sometimes perpetuated the notion that spirituality is a separate realm, perhaps a private one. Classic conservatives have interpreted the words of Jesus, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17) to support this distinction. Baptists, so important in framing the Constitution, required the separation of church and state as an article of their faith.



The Enlightenment distinction had precedent in *De civitate Dei* (413-426), *The City of God*, by Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo. His example and those of subsequent religious authorities led to church intervention in political affairs throughout much of Christian history. The church affirmed the distinction between the secular and the sacred; but it also pronounced that the secular must yield to religious authorities. The division between spirituality and other realms parallels a critical division some faiths like Christianity have often made between the Creator and the creation.

This is partly why Protestant attempts, fueled by the idea of the “priesthood of all believers,” expressed politically in democracy rather than in kingship, ultimately failed to heal the sacred/secular split.

The West invented the idea of “religion” as a separate sphere of culture, just as the conception of “secularism” is distinctively Western. (Secularism can be understood as fragmentation or even cultural schizophrenia.) Ironically, scientific concepts like evolution and ecology threaten the separation between realms, which is why fundamentalist thinking is threatened by such integrative sciences.

In Asian and primal traditions, faith is more likely to be implicit in all activities, rather than confined to one particular arena. Taoism, for example, teaches that the Tao, the Way, is so pervasive that only the ignorant try to identify or locate it.



### Inside . . .

- 2 ON THE PATH: An Interfaith Agencies Roundtable
- 3 CRES NEWS: World Interfaith Leader Dies
- 4 CRES NEWS: Ocean Sunday; Faith in Public Life Panel
- 5 CRES REFRESHER: College/Library Series, #3: Islam
- 6 ED’S PLEA; POEM, QUOTES, HUMOR, COLUMN LIST
- 7 CALENDAR: CRES and other interfaith community events
- 8 ABOUT CRES — YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT WELCOME
- 9-12 REFERENCE SUPPLEMENT . . . *KC Interfaith Opportunities*

### October Holy Days

- 1 *Judaism* Second day of Rosh Hashanah (New Year) \*
- 5 *Christianity* World Communion Day—A day for Holy Communion in the context of the global community of faith.
- 9 *Judaism* Yom Kippur— A time to forgive and ask forgiveness \*
- 9 *Hinduism* Dassehra— Celebrates the victory of good over evil
- 12 *Zoroastrianism* Ghambar Ayathrem begins— Celebrates the creation of plants, the sowing of the winter crop, and the return of herds from pasture.
- 14 *Judaism* Sukkot—Thanksgiving, Festival of Booths.
- 14 *Buddhism* Pavarana — Coming at the full moon, the end of the Rains Retreat.
- 16 *Bahá’i* ‘Ilm, (Knowledge) — The twelfth month of the Baha’i year.
- 20 *Bahá’i* Birth of the Báb
- 20 *Sikhism* Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji—Celebrates the passing on of guruship to the Holy Scriptures.
- 21 *Judaism* Shemini Atzeret — Marks the beginning of Winter in Israel.
- 22 *Judaism* Simhat Torah—Marks the completion and new beginning of the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah in the synagogue.
- 28 *Hinduism* Diwali—Known as the Festival of Lights, it is dedicated to the Goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi in the rest of India.
- 28 *Jainism* Mahavira Nirvana—The 24th Tirthankara attained nirvana and release from the cycle of rebirth.
- 28 *Sikhism* Bandi Chhor Divas (the day of the prisoners release)—Commemorates the return of the 6th Guru, Sri Hargobind Ji, to the holy city of Amritsar.
- 31 *Wicca* Samhain— Celebrates the Celtic New Year.

\*See last month’s *Many Paths* insert for exposition of these holy days.

NOVEMBER: 23 **Thanksgiving Sunday** — 27 **Thanksgiving**

### Question Box

*Will Part 2 of the “Religion and Politics” essay appear in the November issue as originally planned?*

No. In order to focus on faith and government and not the presidential campaign, it will appear in January.



Many languages and cultures have had no word for “religion” because their ways were so interwoven. What was “religion” for the American Indian? It is difficult to separate their religion from hunting, basket-making, raising children, or viewing the seasons. To understand any single aspect of such a culture fully is to understand the entire culture because within each part the whole is embedded or implied.



In his book, *The Western Construction of Religion*, anthropologist and historian of religion Daniel Dubuisson writes, “In all civilizations but our own the distinctions we make between ‘political,’ ‘religious,’ ‘social,’ and ‘civic’ ceremonies scarcely have any meaning.”

We dismember other cultures when we impose our categories of thought on them. As scholar John J Thatamanil suggests, because of cultural colonialism, the world has become as the West has described it, a global misfortune and loss. There was no “Hinduism” until the West invented it. The varied cultural practices of the Indian subcontinent got divided on one hand and lumped together on the other, and the idea of religion was imposed upon subjugated peoples.

“‘Religion’ is not a native category,” says historian of religion Jonathan Z Smith. “It is a category imposed from the outside on some aspect of native culture. It is the other, in these instances colonialists, who are solely responsible for the content of the term.”

However, we must add that we are the exception, having colonized ourselves, unfortunately making “religion” a big deal in politics. Elsewhere I’ve described in detail how I

understand “spirituality” and “civil religion” (*Many Paths* 2002 October and 2008 July). In sum, spirituality is breathing with a sense of the sacred. Civil religion is interpreting public affairs in the categories of faith. A classic example is Lincoln’s idea that a power (God) moving through history toward justice used the Civil War as a dreadful way of ending the evil of slavery when the nation could find no way other than tearing itself apart over it. The freedom Lincoln recalled from Jefferson’s aspirations for the nation is one dimension of spirituality.

So we have every right to know (a) if sectarian theological positions of candidates for election will be pushed into law or public policy and (b) if articulated positions indicate significant failures or hypocrisy.

When one presidential candidate, for example, says with absolute assurance that a fertilized egg is (not only *human* which no one disputes but also) entitled to all the legal protections of *personhood*, and that he would appoint judges and justices to that end, a sectarian theological position is advocated for public policy in a religiously pluralistic society.

When another candidate, facing the same question of when a fertilized egg becomes a *person* says that it is above his “pay grade,” we may appreciate the modesty of the answer on one hand and the recognition on the other that for some traditions in some circumstances, abortion is a requirement, and that common law and most traditions afford rights and recognize *personhood* at birth, as do most cultures; and that even within the Roman Catholic Church until 1859, *ensoulment* was often not

thought to begin until 40 days after conception. There are many theological positions on this question, and certainty of a correct answer ends the conversation in a secular way instead of calling us to

humility about ultimate questions which should unite us in wonder and awe, rather than divide us. By injecting “religion” into a political discussion, we paradoxically lose the spiritual.

Today the confluence of East and West may make it possible to regard spirituality not so much as a theological certainty but more like a pair of glasses through which one sees everything. *Spirituality becomes not a realm apart, but rather experiencing life in its fullness. It is not so much a domain as an orientation. It is not where you stand, but how you show up.* It is not a matter of geography or substance but of perception and process.

When “religion” or sexuality or baseball or study, or feasting — or politics, becomes an expression of, or avenue to, the Whole, it is spiritual. When we remember how all things are connected, and how little we can really know about

When we remember how things are connected, we reclaim our spiritual natures and make faithful politics possible.

ultimate questions, we reclaim our spiritual natures and make faithful politics of the people possible.

We cannot make spirituality a category except linguistically. If we try to do that, it is no longer *spirituality* because it becomes separate from other stuff in a *secular* style of experience.

Religion — not as an institution but as a mode of being — is both all-embracing and all-centering; the process of religion is endless. In this world, what we call religion appears more like a long-running conversation or even an argument than like a light rail line to salvation. —VB

- This monthly journal contains
- ▶ an essay to help us understand and appreciate each other,
  - ▶ calendars of ●holidays ●CRES programs ●community events,
  - ▶ reports about CRES and other interfaith activities
  - ▶ SHORT STUFF ●comment ●humor ●quotations ●poetry,
  - ▶ Reference resources in the monthly supplementary insert, and
  - ▶ An opportunity to support interfaith work (see page 8).

Please tell others about **Many Paths**.



## On the Path

As page 8 indicates, one of our values is *mutuality*, so I am delighted that CRES, the Human Agenda, and the offspring of CRES, the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council, have invited over 30 groups that do some form of interfaith work, to meet together in a “Roundtable” discussion Oct 4 at the House of Menuha, to find ways to be mutually supportive. Some groups are only vaguely aware of each other, so the community will be better served by cooperation and collaboration. CRES put together the list, which is included as this month’s *Many Paths* reference supplement.

Vern Barnett



See also our website,  
www.cres.org

# Our Work in the Community

Upcoming Programs:  
See Page 7

## World Interfaith Leader Dies: Warith Deen Mohammed, 1933-2008



FILE PHOTO: Sheikh Aasim Baheyadeen, the Rev Vern Barnet DMn, the Honorable al-Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, and Rabbi Joshua Taub (then of Congregation B'nai Jehudah) in a photo dated November, 1997, at the occasion of the dedication of Al-Inshirah Islamic Center at 3664 Troost Ave, KCMO 64109. The photo was taken with an early digital camera and "photoshopped" to remove background.

Our Condolences to our Muslim and Interfaith Friends on the death of the Honorable al-Imam W D Mohammed September 9.

He has been called one of the most transformative figures in the recent history of Islam, "America's Imam." He was the first Muslim to offer the invocation for the US Senate.

In Chicago, his father, Elijah Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, was regarded as a separatist Black Muslim leader. But his son, who changed the spelling of his name, brought members of his father's group into

mainstream America and mainstream Islam, and spoke not about separation, but about relationships. He stressed cooperation in doing good works with folks of all faiths.

He had a personal modesty which enabled him to teach and reform by providing experiences to those around him which would lead them to discover the deep meaning and power of their faith. He did not build an organizational empire; his decentralization encouraged strong local leadership to develop and serve each community.



### Diuguid on Diuguid

Vital Conversations leader David Nelson, CRES associate minister, reports that Lewis Diuguid, vice-president and columnist for *The Kansas City Star*, joined the group September 10 for a discussion about his book, *Discovering the Real America: Toward a More Perfect Union*. Diuguid outlined inequality that remains in media coverage. He offered three diversity formulas:

- 1) Talent x Diversity = Productivity
- 2) Talk x Diversity = Social Capital
- 3) (Hope/Prayer + Work) x Diversity = Change.

## Jew, Christian, Muslim Share Bread

On the seventh anniversary of 9/11, CRES Board member Allan Abrams recited Hebrew, CRES friend Ahmed El-Sherif read from the Qur'an in Arabic, and Christian Kimi Whipple read from the Christian scriptures in an evening ceremony at Community Christian Church which concluded with the sharing of bread around the display pictured above.



Canticum Novum, directed to perfection by Jeremy Mims, brought the space to a reverent hush with his singers placed throughout the sanctuary, and City in Motion Children's Dance Theatre dancers articulated in movement of the spirit of the occasion.



Ibn Rushd and Vern

Introduced by the Rev Dr Bob Hill, senior pastor of the church, the Rev Dr Alvin O Jackson, senior pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church in New York, challenged those gathered there not just to make a *difference in the*



Maimonides

*world*, but to make a *different world*.

The Disciples Peace Fellowship patterned the service, *From Pain to Peace: Bringing Bread-Building Bridges*, "after the Cordoba Bread Fest, transcending religious differences by drawing upon the role of bread in the three Abrahamic religions and celebrating the historic period of religious tolerance in Spain during the Middle Ages."



The Córdoba Mezquita

Among the great scholars who worked in Córdoba were the Muslim Ibn Rushd (known in the West as Averroës) and the Jew Maimonides.

October 8 Vital Conversations focuses on *Mitakuye Oyasín: We Are All Related*, by Dr AC Ross, which tells the story of America before Columbus based on the oral history of 33 tribes. During the past twenty years, American Indians have experienced a renaissance of their language, culture, and religion. See the Calendar on page 7 of *Many Paths* or our website for meeting details.

*Please share this journal with your friends — or give them a gift subscription!*

# Our Work in the Community

Upcoming Programs:  
See Page 7

## A Sermon on “Ocean Sunday” at CCCUCC

The Rev Scott Howell, minister of Country Club Congregational United Church of Christ, asked Vern to preach September 21 in his stead on “Ocean Sunday,” part of a series focusing on humankind’s need to care for the creation.

Vern told the congregation that he teased its minister a bit that he, Vern, would be preaching here in Kansas City about the ocean far from the waters of the deep, while Scott’s travel took him to the very beaches of the Atlantic.

Vern also told the congregation that he would do his best to avoid discussing the oceans of red ink created by the current administration.

In three parts, the sermon unfolded. First, the congregation considered the ocean within us, for we are composed of perhaps 90% water, part of a cycle of nature that includes rain, rivers, and the ocean itself which covers two-thirds of the planet’s surface. It is not surprising, then, that so many of us feel somehow akin to the ocean.

To illustrate this, Vern quoted the opening paragraph of *Moby Dick* in which Ishmael sets to sea because he is out of sorts on the land. Vern also recounted a couple incidents aboard ship when he served in the Naval Reserves. And Vern noted that actually the ocean was present in the church in a glass container in which water collected from the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Sea of Japan, the Mediterranean, the Rhine, Seine, Tiber, Danube, Nile, Thames, Mississippi, Missouri, Kaw, Amazon, Ganges, the Jordan, and many other creeks, lakes, and puddles. Some of that water had been poured into the baptismal font before the service began for the congregation’s use.

Secondly, each person received copies of three paintings illustrating different ways of looking at the waters:



Louise Wallace, honored as a Woman of Vision by her Synod, greets Vern after the service. Vern, who happened to express his appreciation for the texts and music that had been arranged for the morning, is holding a copy of 934-page *New Century Hymnal* presented to him.

## Faith and Public Life

Josef Walker, CRES Community Chaplain, makes a point during a September 16 panel on “Faith and Public Life” at Disciples Community of Christ Congregation. Dr Robert Clothier, member of the Independence School Board, shown here left of Joe, also served on the panel.



Xu Daoning’s “Fishermen’s Evening Song” at the Nelson-Atkins. JWM Turner’s “The Slave Ship” at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Pablo Picasso’s “Mother and Child” at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Vern noted how the water unified the first painting, with its dramatic mountains and valleys. He described how Turner presented the practice of throwing slaves in manacles overboard in stormy seas in order to collect the insurance (side comment about AIG.) And the Picasso, so simple, evokes the ongoing generation of human beings in the context the sea, the source of all life.

Then members of the congregation talked with partners about what the paintings evoked in them.

Finally Vern enumerated ways in which the ocean is in peril, and thus all life. He said our forgetfulness about our connectedness is a sign of our desacralized culture and charted the CRES paradigm of crises in nature, selfhood, and society. (See chart on *cres.org*.) The Primal faiths, he said, teach us that “nature is to be respected more than controlled; it is a process which includes us, not a product external to us to be used or disposed of. Our proper attitude toward nature is awe, not utility.”

The secular world threatens us and our environment and separates us as individuals from the ocean of existence. How does one preserve a drop of water? The Buddha’s answer: throw it back into the ocean.



## Donor Information

CRES is a 501(c)(3) charity as determined by the IRS in its 1985 July 17 letter. It is a Kansas not-for-profit also registered in Missouri. It is operated by a Board of Directors and led by the Rev Vern Barnet, DMin and a volunteer staff.

CRES, with its scholarly capacities and practical networking, has been central to the development of interfaith work in Kansas City and has been nationally recognized by CBS-TV, Harvard University’s Pluralism Project, and in other ways.

Because of our professional volunteer staff, your gift to CRES provides an enormous “bang for the buck.”

Please draw your check to  
CRES  
Box 45414  
Kansas City, MO 64171.

For a personal call,  
phone or write  
Vern Barnet,  
913.649.5114  
[vern@cres.org](mailto:vern@cres.org)

If you are not already on our mailing list, you will received *Many Paths* regularly with our thanks.



## Our Web Site

Use your browser refresh button whenever you visit *cres.org* to see updated news and features.



See also our website,  
www.cres.org

# Our Work in the Community

Upcoming Programs:  
See Page 7



## World Religions Symbols

Folks frequently ask for the names of the symbols used on the front page of *Many Paths*.

In response to several recent requests, we reprint their identifications. The symbols fall in four groups. The first 10 represent **primal traditions**; the next 6 are from **Asian faiths**; the next 9 are used for eschatological and **monotheistic religions**; the final 8 represent **contemporary spiritual liberation movements**.

- Mesopotamian Cuneiform for god
- Ancient Egyptian ankh
- Ancient Greek torch
- Ancient Roman scales of justice
- Kinh, Mayan for *sun=day=time*
- Inca Intihuatana, sundial
- Scandinavian sun sign
- Neo-pagan pentagram
- Navajo Thunderbird
- Tribal African fertility image
- Hindu *om*, cosmic awareness
- Buddhist lotus
- Jain ahimsa, no-harm
- Confucian ceremonial vessel
- Yin-yang, often a Taoist symbol
- Shinto torii gate
- Zoroastrian fire pot
- Jewish Star (or shield) of David
- Christian cross
- Islamic star and crescent
- Sufi wings with star and crescent
- Sikh khanda
- Humanist/Freethinker measure (Da Vinci)
- Unitarian/Universalist flaming chalice
- Constitution (American Civil Rlgn)
- Bahá'í 9-pointed star
- earth (equator), ecology
- peace
- racial equality (CORE)
- women's liberation
- men's liberation
- Woodstock communion
- 12-step help groups
- lambda: gay liberation

## Johnson County Community College Series, Part 3: Islam



Vern, series coordinator Maura Conry, and Muslim leader Ahmed El-Sheirf posed for the College photographer before the lecture began.

September 23, Vern spoke about Islam in the third session of his world religions series of four lectures for Johnson County Community College's "Brown & Gold Club," at the Johnson County Central Resource Library's Mona Carmack meeting room, filled with folks eager to learn beyond the misrepresentations in the media and by political interests.

The subject this time was Islam, and Vern's guest was Ahmed El-Sherif, born in the Sinai. He came to the United States in 1979 and became an American citizen in 1985. He has three children. His two sons are students at UMKC and his eldest, a daughter, a law school graduate, is currently teaching abroad.

A scientist in medicinal chemistry, he is president of BetaChem, a life science laboratory, which he began in 1993.

Founder of the American Muslim Council of Greater Kansas City, an organization involving Muslims in mainstream American political life, he participates in various national and international conferences and organizations, such as the UN summit in Copenhagen about social and economic development. He was one of the organizers of the International Conference of Parliamentarians in Belgium on the genocide in Bosnia. Locally his activities have included coordinating a conference on the Rights of Children with former mayor of Kansas City, Dr Charles Wheeler.

As a graduate student, he served the Muslim communities as imam in Tuscon, AZ (where he was also president of the Islamic Center), Jonesboro, AR (where he founded the Islamic Center and served as its president), and Davis and Sacramento.

He has been active with Heart to Heart International. El-Sherif has been instru-

mental in distributing needed medicine to places such as the Ukraine, with personal trips to Iraq (where he traveled with former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark), Egypt, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, Bosnia, and Afghanistan for over twenty years.

When black churches in the South were being burned, he organized an interfaith effort in Kansas City to raise money for their reconstruction. He has provided hospitality for foreign visitors, including Israeli officials interested in dialogue for peace.

His interfaith activities are numerous. For example, in 1999 he hosted Joel Lavi, Jewish mayor of Kansas City sister city Romle, Israel, Arab city councilman Michael Fanous, and others in his home during their visit here. In 2000 he convened an interfaith panel at Johnson County Community College for visitors from Israel, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, and the West Bank, in cooperation with the International Visitors Council of Greater Kansas City. He has appeared in many interfaith forums, including the CRES "Gifts of Pluralism" conference. In 2000, he was given the Bodhisattva Award for his humanitarian and interfaith work by the Rime Buddhist Center and Monastery.

Vern began the session by outlining the West's indebtedness to Islam (see *Many Paths*, 2007 April), placing Islam in context with the other monotheistic faiths, and identifying the three families of faiths and the wisdom we need from them to respond to the three great crises of our desecralized culture — in the environment, in personhood, and in society. He then put questions to El-Sherif about his faith, and then took questions from the very active and appreciative audience.

The October 14 lecture is on Buddhism.



Josef Walker, CRES community chaplain, host Dr Iftexhar Ahmed, and Akhtar Chaudry, CFO at Union Station, enjoy an Iftar September 14.

See also our website,  
[www.cres.org](http://www.cres.org)

# CRES Miscellany

Upcoming Programs:  
See Page 7

## HateBusters

### A Plea from Ed Chasteen

Box 442, 816- 803-8371, Liberty, MO 64069  
hatebuster@aol.com;  
www.hatebusters.com



*Ed is CRES Amity Shaman.  
Read this and you'll see  
why, and how you can help.*

### A Hate Crime

Missouri City is a tiny town just 10 miles from my house in Liberty. I often ride my bicycle there, past the Missouri City School, the smallest AAA School in Missouri, so the marquee in front announces. Jay Jackson, the superintendent-bus driver-custodian-teacher, made national news in 1990 when his school bused inner city children from Kansas City to be educated in this place where everybody knows your name.

Clay County authorities today, September 10, 2008 charged a 52-year old Missouri City man with third-degree assault, a hate crime, for yelling racist epithets and threatening to kill an interracial couple in Missouri City.

"Nigger lover," the man yelled, "I'm going to kill the nigger lover, your wife, your children and your girl." The married couple threatened has two children, a 4-year old and a 6-year old.

As soon as I heard about this despicable act, I drove to Missouri City and found the house where the couple live. She is a 5th grade teacher in Kansas City. He is employed by a large corporation. No one was home. So I drove to the Missouri City School to ask Jay Jackson to help. Jay gave me the phone number and address.

The threatened wife and mother is from Ghana, a graduate of Park University. The husband was recently put in charge of the diversity program at his work. They, their two children and the wife's mother, have lived in Missouri City for several years.

I can ride my bicycle about 125 miles on my very best days. I drew a 125-circle around my home in Liberty. I call all places within that circle Greater Liberty. I made a public promise that HateBusters would respond to any act of hate within that circle. We will do all we can to set folks at liberty from those dark places of heart, mind and soul that breed hate.

This family needs to know they have friends. I want them to get sacks full of mail. LOVE LETTERS, I call them. Here's what I want you to do. Write a letter. Address it to THE LOVED FAMILY. I choose not to identify the family in this email. You may call me

if you would like to know. Address your letter to Missouri City School, 700 East Main, Missouri City, MO 64072. Jay will get your letters to the family.

When you have written your own letter, pass this plea along to folks on your email list. Ask them to write a letter and pass the plea to their friends. Let's get LOVE LETTERS from every state in America. Let's make clear to the person who committed this hate crime that his intended victims have thousands of friends. Let's buoy these good people above the troubled waters that without us may drown them. After a few weeks when I think the letters have all come, I will write the story of all we have done to help and email it to you. After I have talked to the family, I will let you know what else we can do to help.

Bless you, my friends. —Ed

## Quotations

For me, as a Roman Catholic, I'm prepared to accept the teachings of my church. But for me to impose that judgment on everyone else who is equally and maybe even more devout than I am seems to me is inappropriate in a pluralistic society.

—Joseph Biden, about reproductive rights

A fanatic is someone who knows he's doing exactly what the Lord would do if the Lord were also in possession of the facts. — "Mr Dooley" (Finley Peter Dunne)

In sports men become boys. In boxing, boys become men. But in mixed martial arts, boys become animals. — Peter Wood, former NY Golden Gloves finalist

You may not be able to change the world, but at least you can embarrass the guilty. —Jessica Mitford

## Humor

*Sayings of a Long Island (maybe Jewish) Buddhist:*

If there is no self, whose arthritis is this?

Be here now. Be someplace else later. Is that so complicated?

Drink tea and nourish life; with the first sip, joy; with the second sip, satisfaction; with the third sip, peace; with the fourth, a Danish.

Wherever you go, there you are. Your luggage is another story.

Accept misfortune as a blessing. Do not wish for perfect health, or a life without problems. What would you talk about?

There is no escaping karma. In a previous life, you never called, you never wrote, you never visited. And whose fault was that?

The Tao does not speak. The Tao does not blame. The Tao does not take sides. The Tao has no expectations. The Tao demands nothing of others. The Tao is not Jewish.

Deep inside you are ten thousand flowers. Each flower blossoms ten thousand times. Each blossom has ten thousand petals. You might want to see a specialist.

## The Poetry Path

Poems with spiritual significance

### Water

Philip Larkin 1922 – 1985 [see page 4]

If I were called in  
To construct a religion  
I should make use of water.

Going to church  
Would entail a fording  
To dry, different clothes;

My litany would employ  
Images of sousing,  
A furious devout drench,

And I should raise in the east  
A glass of water  
Where any-angled light  
Would congregate endlessly.

### 24th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Family Ritual Meal

Nov 23 Sun 6-8p  
St Paul's Episcopal  
Church, 40th and Main  
mark your calendar now!



## KC Star Column

Vern's Wednesday FYI "Faiths and Beliefs" columns included these recent topics:

- 0903 Jill Carroll, energetic religions expert
- 0910 Breaking bread together ala Córdoba
- 0917 W D Mohammed, "America's imam"
- 0924 Musician/songwriter Barclay Martin

Add your comment under the column on *The Star's* web site.

For the full text, please visit <http://www.cres.org> (sometimes the printed version gives way to ad space) or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to CRES, Box 45414, Kansas City, MO 64171.



New listings and details at our website, [www.cres.org](http://www.cres.org)

# Calendar

Annual Thanksgiving Sunday Convocation: 2008 Nov 23



Barclay Martin Ensemble — Music with spiritual depth. See our web calendar [www.cres.org](http://www.cres.org) for current performance information or visit [barclaymarin.com](http://barclaymarin.com).

## October

Oct 3 Fri 5p — Oct 5: Breath of Earth, Breath of Life, a weekend residential mindfulness retreat, Marillac Center, Leavenworth, KS, 816 531 1272, Mindfulnesskc.org, \$210 per person double / \$260.

Oct 4 Sat 9:30a-1:30p, followed by vegetarian lunch — Durga Puja (Hindu) festival, Lenexa Community Center, 13420 Oak St, 913.541.0209, \$20.

\*Oct 4 Sat 9a-11a — Interfaith Roundtable, House of Menuha, 801 E 77, cosponsored by CRES, the Human Agenda, and the Interfaith Council.



Oct 4 Sat 9:30a — Community forum with Jim Wallis, president of Sojourners, Church of the Resurrection, 13720 Roe, [cor.org](http://cor.org). [June file photo: Wallis and Vern, who is obliged to be at the event above.]

Oct 4 Sat 9:30-11:30a — “Religion & Politics: Election 2008,” scholar Richard McBrien, ASUUC.

\*Oct 8 Wed 1p — # *Mitakuye Oyasin: We Are All Related* by AC Ross. America before Columbus from 33 tribes’ oral history; Gayl Edmunds, Native American Spiritual guide for the Life Connections Program at US Penitentiary, Leavenworth, will participate.

Oct 10-12 Fri-Sun — Leaders Retreat, St Benedict’s Abbey, Atchison; Wise Men’s Retreats, James L Fleming MD, sponsored by Prairie Health Services Inc; [jflemingmd@yahoo.com](mailto:jflemingmd@yahoo.com) or 816.213.1885; \$150.

Oct 12 Sun 6p — 12th Annual Eid Celebration and Awards Dinner, Crescent Peace Society, featuring Iftekhar A Hai, internationally celebrated interfaith lecturer, author, and leader, and guesta Samira Hussain and Faroukh’s Hasan, Fulbright-Hays award winners; Ritz-Charles, 9000 W 137, [crescentpeace.org](http://crescentpeace.org).

\*Oct 14 Tue 2p Vern lectures for JCCC on Buddhism, JCCL, free.



Oct 19 Sun 6:00p - 8:30p — Connie Dover, Celtic Singer, Balladeer & Poet, Hillside Christian Church, 900 NE Vivion Rd, [menuha.org](http://menuha.org), \$20 advance, \$25 Door, benefit for House of Menuha.

\*Oct 19 Sun 6:30-8p — Vern speaks to adults and teens on Art and the Spirit, Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 12800 W 75, free. [Velásquez painting]



\*Nov 12 Wed 1p — # *Muhammad* by Karen Armstrong and “Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet” video.

Nov 13 Thu 11:30a-1:30p (11a-2p) — 4th annual Table of Faiths luncheon, honoring the Rev Bob Hill and Shawnee Mission Medical Center, remembering Steve Jeffers; Hyatt Regency Downtown.

Nov 16 Sun 6p — Annual Harmony Interfaith Choir Concert, Concord Fortress of Hope, 7710 E 102.

Nov 16 Sun 3p — Kansas City Star Book Club, *Three Cups of Tea*, The Writer’s Place.

Nov 17 time TBA — *The Hindu and the Cowboy and Other Kansas City Stories*, a 1-hour play based on interviews with Kansas Citians of diverse faith traditions, created after the CRES Gifts conference.

\*Nov 20 Thu 2:30p — The Sacred in Asian Art, a lecture by Vern Barnett, Kansas City Art Institute, Anton Jacob’s class.

\*Nov 23 Sun 6-8p — 24th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Family Ritual Meal, this year at St Paul’s Episcopal Church, 40th and Main.



## Looking Ahead

\*Nov 2 Sun 9:30-10:30a — Vern on Local Sacred Sites; sacred (but not religious) sites in metro Kansas City. How do you identify and describe places in our area with spiritual significance? What characteristics make a space holy? VPC.

\*Nov 3 eve — Is God a Problem? — dialogue with the Rev Paul Hasselbeck and Vern beginning “Lyceum 2008” with Bishop John Shelby Spong, Nancy R Howell, and Bart D Ehrman; UVCC.



Nov 3 Mon 7p-8:30p — Interfaith Council Book Club:

To add items to the calendar, please use the form at [www.cres.org/calendar](http://www.cres.org/calendar) — thanks for your help.

Lynne McTaggart: The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Uni-

verse and The Intention Experiment: Using Your Thoughts to Change Your Life, SCS.

\*Nov 7-23 FESTIVAL OF FAITHS — SEE GROWING LIST AT [festivaloffaithskc.org](http://festivaloffaithskc.org).

\*Nov 7 Fri 6:30p — Academy of Welcome, *For the Bible Tells Me So* film with Vern moderating an interfaith panel, First Lutheran., 6400 State Line.

Nov 7 Fri 7:30p — What Is Sacred? . . . A First Friday exhibit featuring works of area artists, teen arts and an interfaith slide show; Rime Buddhist Center, 700 West Pennway.

\*Nov 8 Sat 6:30p — Panel moderated by Vern Barnett on “Judith,” a performance of which follows at 8p, Friends of Chamber Music, GHT.

\*Nov 9 Sun 9:30-10:30a — The Sacred in Art, VPC.

Nov 11 Tue 7p — Voicing the Spiritual Self: The Interfaith Language of Doubt and Belief, writers read their works at the Writers Place, 3607 Pennsylvania.

### NOTES AND LOCATIONS

\*CRES sponsorship, consultation, or leadership; free unless noted.

# VITAL CONVERSATIONS — led by CRES associate minister David Nelson, [humanagenda@juno.com](mailto:humanagenda@juno.com), at the Mid Continent Library, 6060 N Chestnut, Gladstone. Vital — that which creates life and hope. Conversations — intentional moments of listening and talking. A collaboration with the Greater KC Interfaith Council.

ASUUC — All Souls UU Church, 4501 Walnut

CC — Colonial Church, 7039 Mission Road

CCIH — Community of Christ International Headquarters, 1001 West Walnut, Independence, MO

CSC — Christian Science Center, Red Bridge Shopping Center, Red Bridge (111 / Holmes), south side, 913-268-8212, [pcpeck99@hotmail.com](mailto:pcpeck99@hotmail.com)

CSW — Center for Spirit at Work Breakfast Club, Westin Crown Center Hotel, 816.268.1078, [reservations@centerforspiritatwork.org](mailto:reservations@centerforspiritatwork.org)

DTMT Downtown Marriott Tower, 12th/Wyandppte

FT — Folly Theater

GHT — Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

JCCC — Johnson County Community College

JCCL — Johnson Co Central Library, 9875 West 87

NA — The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

OPM — Overland Park Marriott

PCC — Plymouth Congregational Church, 925 Vermont, Lawrence

PL — Plaza Library

SMRC — St Mark’s Roman Catholic Church, 3736 Lee’s Summit Road, Independence

TC — Tivoli Cinemas, 4050 Pennsylvania

UMKC — University Center, 5100 Rockhill Road

UTP — Unity Temple on the Plaza, 707 W 47

UVCC — Unity Village Conference Center, 1901 NW Blue Parkway, Unity Village, MO

VPC — Village (Presbyterian) Church, 6641 Mission

VS — Vedanta Society of KC, 8701 Ward Parkway, 816.444.8045, [vedantakc.org](http://vedantakc.org)




**CRES** Greater Kansas City's multi-faith resource  
Promoting understanding among all faiths through civic involvement, teaching, consultation, and writing

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\$\_\_\_\_\_ Low Income



Oct 14 Mon 2p  
Vern lectures on Buddhism  
Johnson Co Central Resource Library

Oct 19 Sun 6:30-8p  
Vern speaks on Art and the Spirit  
Good Shepherd Catholic Church

See p7 calendar and our website for details and other gigs!



**Many Paths**  
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 Editorial address: Box 45414, KC MO 64171

World Faiths Center for Religious Experience and Study  
 mailing address: Box 4165  
 Overland Park, KS 66204

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**A PRINTED COPY OF THIS JOURNAL CAN BE MAILED TO YOU. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR INTEREST BY SENDING A CHECK TO SUPPORT INTERFAITH WORK TO**

**CRES**  
**BOX 45414**  
**KANSAS CITY, MO 64171**

**VISION**

CRES envisions metro Kansas City as a model community honoring interfaith relationships

- ▶ as a way of deepening one's own tradition and spirituality, and
- ▶ where the wisdom of the many faiths meaningfully addresses our
  - environmental, ● personal, and
  - social crises, and thus promotes healing, justice, and peace.

**MISSION**

To honor the sacred wherever it appears, to support its appearance everywhere — especially by promoting interfaith understanding in metro Kansas City and beyond

**OUR GUIDING QUESTION**

What is sacred?— what is so important that my life depends upon it, that I would die for it — and what may I do to understand, honor, and share it?

**THE CRES MOTTO**

- **Primal Faiths:** restored with nature
- **Asian Faiths:** the self made whole
- **Monotheistic Faiths:** community in covenant
- **Liberation Movements:** finding the sacred afresh

**OUR VALUES**

**Mutuality.** For CRES, mutuality means fully embracing both differences and similarities, both distinct traditions and universal kinship. We understand ourselves better by understanding others.

**Exploration.** For CRES, exploring one another's faiths leads neither to conversion nor syncretism, but rather to mutual purification and the deepening of our own traditions.

**Service.** CRES offers multi-faith resources and processes to the community for interfaith encounter and service to the secular world. We need each other's insights and aid to respond to the crises of secularism.

**CRES WORKS TO**

- promote interfaith dialog and cooperation
- provide insight into the problems and possibilities of global community
- support and enhance the efforts of existing KC area religious and educational organizations
- interpret religious dimensions of American and international culture
- enrich and refresh the life of the individual
- deepen awareness of our participation in the natural environment

**FOUR REASONS FOR INTERFAITH WORK**

- ▶ We are kin.
- ▶ We understand ourselves better by understanding others.
- ▶ Genuine interfaith encounter leads to mutual purification and the deepening of our own traditions.
- ▶ We need each other's insights to respond to the
  - environmental, ● personal, and ● social crises of our age.

**OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

- The Kansas City Interfaith Council, 1989-2004 (CRES founded and hosted it as a program and arranged its independence in 2005).
- The first interfaith conference in the region's history with 250 people from 14 faiths, A to Z — American Indian to Zoroastrian.
- Our monthly 12-page color journal, *Many Paths*.
- Our extensive web site, [www.cres.org](http://www.cres.org).
- Our annual Thanksgiving Sunday Interfaith Family Ritual Meal.
- Our Passport congregational visitation program.
- Sparking efforts like *The Hindu and the Cowboy and Other Kansas City Stories* and interfaith book clubs.
- Other programs, consultations, teaching, writing, networking, and resources requested by international and community groups, including the nation's first Interfaith Academies and the metro Festival of Faiths.
- The services of a professional staff that includes Dr Vern Barnet, who writes *The Kansas City Star* "Faiths and Beliefs" column each Wednesday.

**Board of Directors**

Board Chair Joe Archias; President Vern Barnet; Secretary Jim Houx; Allan Abrams, Rick Childs, Anton Jacobs, Mahnaz Shabbir, John Shelton, the Hon Robert T Stephan

**Board of Advisors**

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Primal faiths: Restored with nature Asian faiths: the self made whole Monotheistic faiths: community in covenant Liberation faiths: the sacred discovered afresh

This is a revision and an expansion of our compilation first published in 2006 June. Our website has been continually updated, and we welcome additional material and correction which will be posted in our website as we receive it. It was originally based on the 2002 "Report" appendices of the Jackson County Diversity Task Force chaired by Vern Barnet with Rodger Kube, research associate. (For information and photo, visit cres.org/kc.) This document is prepared both for Many Paths subscribers and for those attending the "Interfaith Organizations Roundtable" October 4 for enhanced cooperation.

0. Introduction

- 1. Information Sources
2. Annual Interfaith Events
3. Sometimes Relevant Organizations
4. Intentionally Interfaith Organizations

The National Catholic Reporter

This outstanding paper (also on line) occasionally reports interfaith stories and special profiles of non-Christian faiths.

KC Jewish Chronicle (Fridays)

This weekly offers information about the Jewish community, its organizations, and the variety of opinions therein.

Camp (twice monthly)

Vern writes the "Sacred Paths" column most months.

Many Paths (CRES monthly 12-page color journal)

- Each issue routinely contains
- an essay to guide understanding issues of pluralism,
- calendars of community events and CRES programs,
- a holiday calendar,
- reader comments,
- humor,
- quotations,
- poetry,
- reference resources in the supplementary insert.

Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council Newsletter

A quarterly publication with news about Council and other interfaith events.

KCPT Channel 19 Public Television

Occasionally the Friday KC Week in Review with Nick Haines presents local religious issues with reporters and clergy.

2. Annual Interfaith Events

Some events may migrate from one month to another.

Mayors' Prayer Breakfasts. — Area observances vary from decidedly Christian to deliberately interfaith events. The Raytown Community Interfaith Alliance's observance truly is a prayer event embracing every faith.

JANUARY.

The annual Martin Luther King observance brings folks together from many faiths. Journey toward Understanding (high school program).

FEBRUARY.

Jan 30 - Apr 4 The Season for Non-Violence, an observance of 64 days between the memorial anniversaries of Gandhi and King, is hosted in Kansas City by the Center for Spiritual Living.

National Council of Jewish Women luncheon (Greater KC) Mayors' Prayer Breakfast, KCMO

MARCH.

Raytown Mayor's Prayer Breakfast Harmony Week Luncheon

SEPTEMBER.

Annual Conference on Health and Spirituality, Community of Christ Temple. Crescent Peace Society annual dinner.

NOVEMBER.

Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council Table of Faiths luncheon. Harmony Choral Concert.

CRES Thanksgiving Sunday Family Interfaith Thanksgiving Ritual Meal (the Sunday before the holiday, 6p), since 1985,

a full meal in liturgical style with greetings from American Indian, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, Zoroastrian and Freethinker traditions and American history and aspirations. Awards for distinguished interfaith leadership are presented.

Raytown Community Interfaith Alliance Thanksgiving Service (Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving).

Pilgrim Chapel Interfaith Thanksgiving Service (Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving).

DECEMBER.

Interfaith "World Peace Celebration" Dec. 31 at 6a (gather at 5:30a), Rime Buddhist Center.

3. Sometimes Relevant Organizations

This list does not include groups like the Greater Kansas City Coalition for Worker Justice, the Independence Ministerial Alliance, Raytown Community Inter-Faith Alliance, Wyandotte Interfaith Sponsoring Council, Project Equality, or More2 which develop their membership and plan their programming to be religiously inclusive but may have economic, racial, collegial, civic, or other issues as their primary focus. They may be interfaith in the sense that they involve people from several traditions, but not in the sense that their focus is the sacred as revealed through different faiths.

Surely institutions like

- \* the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
\* the International Relations Council,
\* the Center for Practical Bioethics,
\* Union Station and its exhibits from time to time
\* the American Civil Liberties Union, and
\* the American Friends Service Committee are significant resources for interfaith understanding, as are schools which offer programs and instruction in world religions such as
\* the Saint Paul School of Theology,
\* the Nazarene Theological Seminary,
\* Central Baptist Theological Seminary
\* Unity Institute
\* Ottawa University—KC
\* Community of Christ Seminary
\* Park University
\* Avila University
\* UMKC Center for Religious Studies
\* KU Department of Religious Studies
\* William Jewell College

(We cannot recommend Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as its approach to non-Christian faiths is unreliable and hostile.)

We also omit private groups open only by invitation, like the Interfaith Dinner group.

This list does include some organizations with specific programs or directions aimed at interfaith understanding even if their main focus is broader.

We want to salute the impact of organizations which no longer exist as well, such as Ecumedia and the KC Interfaith Peace Alliance, and interfaith relief efforts like the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging, Kansas City Helps, and Heart to Heart International.

Nowadays hospitals, schools, religious organizations and others are helping us all to recognizing the faiths of our neighbors through a variety of special programs.

CRES may be the most connected interfaith effort in Kansas City, but it is not the only one. An increasing number of organizations bring interfaith awareness to their work, and some of them are deliberate in promoting interfaith opportunities or access. We hope this draft, the first of periodic compilations of organizations, will assist you in strengthening our community by building interfaith understanding. Please let us know about the groups we missed.

As our desacralized culture creates crises in the environment, in personhood, and in society, and as the threat of theocracy looms, you can encourage America's tradition of pluralism and recall us to the sacred bonds the sundry faiths recognize by

- supporting these organizations,
- writing newspapers,
- phoning in on talk shows,
- arranging speaking engagements for your clubs;
and specifically, working through CRES, you can
- write a report on events for Many Paths
- distribute CRES materials at meetings
- help to prepare Many Paths for mailing
- research (such as helping us to complete this list of interfaith organizations)
- volunteer to assist with CRES workshops, etc
- provide your special skills and talents, such as offering music for one of our programs, hosting a fund-raiser in your home to acquaint friends with CRES and Many Paths, assist with our web site, tape CRES appearances, etc.

1. Information Sources

The Kansas City Star (also on line)

- \* Helen Gray, faith editor
\* Faith announcements, Saturday
\* Bill Tammeus, Saturday faith columnist and daily blogger
\* Vern Barnet, Wednesday free-lance columnist and occasional blogger
\* Faith columnists from many traditions appear in rotation on Saturday
\* Regular news and features often include topics of diverse faiths

KC Muslim News Digest (email)

This compilation of announcements and links to stories of importance to Muslims and to interfaith work is comprehensive and includes local material.

0810c

Pull-out Insert Reference Supplement for your file, notebook, or shelf.

## 4. Intentionally Interfaith Organizations

### Center for Spirit at Work

4310 Madison Av #204, KCMO 64111; 816.268.1077  
centerforspiritatwork.org/  
info@centerforspiritatwork.org

CSW, founded eight years ago as the Cathedral Center for Faith and Work, then based at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, offers programs by people of all faiths. Recent speakers have included Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim leaders in their fields, such as Henry Bloch, Irv Hockaday, Gary Forsee, Tom McDonnell, Mike Haverty, Bill, Terry and Peggy Dunn, Dick Miller, Carol Marinovich, Kay Barnes, Jim Stowers, Shirley and Barnett Helzberg, Joan Israelite, Buck O'Neal, Alvin Brooks, Clyde Wendel, Adel Hall, Tom Hoenig, Mahnaz Shabbir, and Vern Barnet.

These breakfast and dinner sessions are open to the public. Those who attend get thinking of the highest quality from folks of different faiths about how the spirit informs, or can inform, the workplace.

### Community Praying for Peace

communitypeace.com/id18.html

CPP provides opportunities for people of many faiths to pray together for peace.

### CRES

[World Faiths Center for Religious Experience and Study]  
Box 45414, Kansas City, MO 64171  
cres.org; staff@cres.org

[aka Multi-faith Community Resource for Exploring Spirituality, Box 4165, Overland Park, KS 66204]

Founded in 1982, its many achievements include establishing the KC Interfaith Council with American Indian, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian-Protestant, Christian-Roman Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, and Zoroastrian members, organizing the 2001 Gifts of Pluralism conference (attended by 250 youth and adults from these faiths as well as Christian Orthodox and Free-Thinker traditions) and many other workshops and conferences, planning the city-wide 2002 9/11 observances, networking with many other organizations and staffing their programs, consultation, teaching, writing, and civic leadership, including chairing a 5-county diversity study commissioned by Jackson County, with a 77-page report issued one day before the first anniversary of 9/11.

A 32-page Interfaith Passport and other programs were the subject of a half-hour CBS-TV special in 2002 and has been imitated in other cities.

Donna Ziegenhorn of the CRES auxiliary Mosaic, wrote the play *The Hindu and the Cowboy and Other Kansas City Stories* from a collection of over 80 interviews from KC area residents of all faiths following the 2001 conference.

The 12-page monthly color journal *Many Paths* and the CRES website are key interfaith resources for the metro area. Other publications are used nationally.

The CRES minister, the Rev Vern Barnet, DMn, has won many awards from Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and secular groups. He is a frequent speaker at area religious centers and writes the Wednesday "Faiths and Beliefs" column in *The Kansas City Star*.

Because of the CRES network, the nation's first Interfaith Academies were held here in 2007, in cooperation with Harvard University's Pluralism Project, Religions for Peace-USA at the UN Plaza, the Saint Paul School of Theology, and the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council. Vern was a member of the international faculty and coordinated the study-visits to six area sites to supplementary classroom experiences. Vern also signed the

Certificates for satisfactory program completion.

At the Academies, designed for both students and professionals, Ellie Pierce, principal researcher for The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, began her lecture by saying, "At the Pluralism Project, we consider Kansas City to be truly at the forefront of interfaith relations. This is — in no small part — due to the tireless efforts of Vern Barnet, whose work and writings have been an inspiration to all of us at the Pluralism Project."

Board chairs David Stallings, Larry Guillot, and L Joseph Archias have helped to make interfaith work a mainstream Kansas City priority.

For the CRES vision, mission, values, programs, and other positions, visit the web site or turn to page 8 of *Many Paths*, and examine the research program suggested by the chart on the next page.

CRES was founded as the [World Faiths] Center for Religious Experience and Study, sometimes known as the [multifaith] Community Resource for Exploring Spirituality.

CRES is a unique approach to interfaith work, joining together relationships and scholarship, theory and practice. Its research program identifies wisdom from the world's three great families of faith to address our environmental, personal, and social crises.

### Crescent Peace Society

crescentpeace.org/ 913-491-5509  
Box 27023, Shawnee Mission, KS 66225

The Crescent Peace Society is a non-profit organization that serves as a focal point of action in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area for raising awareness of different Muslim cultures. It establishes and maintains liaisons with educational institutions, religious groups, and local media.

In order to better represent the peaceful nature of Muslim cultures existing in the United States of America and around the world, the Society aims to analyze, evaluate, and respond to any local media publications or programs that misrepresent Muslim issues and cultures.

The Board and the Executive Committee of Crescent Peace Society invite you to join the Society's cause for propagating a better understanding and awareness of different Muslim cultures and for peace and harmony all over the world. Membership is open to all US residents or citizens of any religious affiliation or culture.

### Cultural Crossroads Inc

3605 Blue Ridge Boulevard  
Independence, MO 64052; 816.737.5979  
CulturalCrossroads@hotmail.com  
culturalcrossroads-kc.org

Cultural Crossroads, founded by Mary McCoy, was incorporated in 2001 and conducts cross-cultural education in an interactive environment, designed to promote tolerance and respect through understanding the commonalities across diverse cultures. The focus of all programs is on common life experiences of people of all cultures and an understanding of the unifying elements within an environment of diversity. Volunteer opportunities are limitless and include creation, scheduling, and presentation of educational programs, publicity and communication, and promoting the organization. Cultural Crossroads is also seeking to develop a cultural heritage center in the greater Kansas City area.

### Diversity Coalition (Kansas City)

c/o Allan Abrams, aeabrams@yahoo.com  
c/o Lewis Diuguid, ldiuguid@kstar.com

The KCDC was organized in 1996 by the late Dr David Shapiro as an adjunct to his Minority Museum which opened in 1991 in south Kansas City. It has no formal membership and no dues. Its participants discuss

international or national political issues, particularly emotionally charged topics which could be affected by one's faith, ethnic, or regional perspective. Meetings are usually held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7-9p.

### Festival of Faiths

festivloffaithskc.org/  
info@festivloffaithskc.org

Initiated in 2007 by folks at Village Presbyterian Church in consultation with interfaith leaders in the metro area, Festival of Faiths brings a focus to the many faith communities in our area for a fortnight in November. Its first year began with the Interfaith Council's Table of Faiths and concluded with the 23d annual CRES Interfaith Thanksgiving Sunday Family Ritual Meal. Inspired in part by a Louisville-type metro-wide collaboration to display, enjoy, and celebrate our religious diversity, it has been adapted to the unique situation and opportunities in Kansas City.

The Greater Kansas City Community is emerging as a leader in the recognition and celebration of religious and spiritual pluralism. The festival celebrates that process by:

- Casting a spotlight on interfaith opportunities
- Building relationships that foster interfaith dialogue
- Increasing leadership through innovative program collaborations
- Identifying commonly held beliefs while deepening one's own faith
- Widening the circle of interfaith participation

The Festival of Faiths is a series of cornerstone events designed to build awareness of the wealth of religious and interfaith activities in Kansas City, to widen participation in interfaith dialogue, to create interfaith dialogue and relationships through the planning and execution of Festival events, and to attract a large and diverse audience for the Keynote Speaker Event, the next of which will be January 26, 2009 with Jon Meacham, editor of *Newsweek*.

The Mission of the Festival of Faiths is to discover, recognize, celebrate and promote the reality of pluralism in our community through listening, learning, understanding and experience – the exercise of acceptance.

For additional information, or to sponsor a portion of the Festival, please contact info@festivloffaithskc.org, or call 913.432.2107.

### Friends of Sacred Structures

fosskc.org, 201 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO 64111  
Friends of Sacred Structures (FOSS) is dedicated to the preservation of historic religious structures for active community use in Kansas City. FOSS strives to increase public awareness of these buildings' culture, history, and architecture.

FOSS is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. The support of contributing members is critical to sustaining FOSS programs. We invite you to renew or become a member of FOSS. Members receive Inspired Space, a quarterly newsletter, invitations to special events, and an opportunity to benefit historic sacred structures throughout metropolitan Kansas City.

### Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council

kcinterfaith.org info@kcinterfaith.org  
Shannon Clark, Executive Director, 913-548-2973  
PO Box 415, Louisburg, KS 66053

Organized by Vern Barnet in 1989, the Council was a program of CRES until 2005. A 5,000-word history of this period is available at [cres.org/now/ifc-hist.htm](http://cres.org/now/ifc-hist.htm). CRES support for 2004 included staff work by CRES administrative assistant, Simon Gatsby, who then transitioned the Council to independence as part of a cooperative plan for 2005 with advice from Religions for Peace-





USA which then provided some funding. The Council's web site posted PDF versions of the Council's page in the monthly CRES journal, *Many Paths*, for the year 2005.

That year on November 10, the Council awarded Vern its first "Table of Faiths" award, presented by Mayor Kay Barnes, honorary chair and keynote speaker, at a luncheon with over 600 people of all faiths. A 12-minute DVD with Vern, Governor Sebelius, Huston Smith, and local political and business leaders was produced and shown, and is available from the Council. David Nelson was the Council convener and the luncheon co-charis were Alvin Brooks, Gayle Krigel, Mahnaz Shabbir, and Chuck Stanford.

At the Council's Second Table of Faiths Celebration, co-chaired by Mahnaz Shabbir, Sheila Sonnenschein, and Chuck Stanford, with honorary co-chairs Kay Barnes, Alvin Brooks, Ben Craig, and Peggy Dunn, and Advisor Gayle Krigel, with Co-conveners Caroline Baughman and David Nelson, awards were given to Don and Adele Hall and Ed Chasteen. A video narrated by Bill Tammeus presented the development of the Council.

The Third Table of Faiths Celebration, chaired by Sheila Sonnenschein and Susan Cook, with honorary chairs Dianne Cleaver, Mark Funkhouser, and the Rev Dr Bob Meneilly, honored Alvin Brooks and The Kansas City Star. A video, a portion of which can be seen at Sacred Art at [cres.org](http://cres.org) includes a look at art from many faiths and the spiritual impulse out of which all art arises.

The Council's statement: "We are growing a sustainable, pervasive culture of knowledge, respect, appreciation, and trust amongst people of all faiths and religious traditions in the greater Kansas City community."

Its goals:

1. To develop deeper understanding within the community of each other's faiths and traditions, and to foster appropriate interfaith dialogue and interaction,
2. To model spiritual and religious values, especially mutual respect and cooperation, in a society often intolerant of cultural and religious diversity,
3. To develop and provide resources, networking, and programs for the community through the arts and education to increase appreciation for cultural and religious diversity,
4. To work with educational, spiritual and religious leaders and the media in promoting accurate and fair portrayal of the faiths within our community, and
5. To help the community become more aware of the spiritual values that can help resolve issues that occur in the environmental, social and personal realms of our lives.

The Council usually meets the 2nd Monday of the month.

It offers two interfaith book clubs. David Nelson facilitates the northland book club, Vital Conversations, at the Mid-Continent Library, Antioch Branch 6060 N Chestnut in Gladstone 1p the second Wednesday of each month; 816.454.1306. Pam Peck facilitates the south club. It meets four times a year, 7p the first Monday in February, May, August, and November, at the Christian Science Center, 504 E. 112, Red Bridge Shopping Center, 111 (Red Bridge Road) and Holmes; 816.268.8212.

### Harmony

4901 Main, Suite 300, Kansas City, MO 64112  
kcharmony.org, 816-333-5059

When Harmony first debuted in Kansas City in 1988, the mission was singular—to ease racial boundaries in communities throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. However, local leaders Emanuel Cleaver II and Drue Jennings had a broader perspective; they envisioned a community-wide resource available to address all issues of diversity in the region. Under the keen vi-

sion of these leaders and other key supporters, Harmony quickly became a trusted resource offering nationally acclaimed programming, training and consulting to schools and workplaces.

Harmony acquired the legacy of the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) when the two organizations merged their resources in 2005. The result was a comprehensive offering of programs and consulting resources that spans a life-long learning cycle starting at the middle-school education level and reaching into adulthood.

Harmony provides resources, programs and events including a week-long Harmony Youth Leadership Institute; Manytown and Unitown, two day programs for middle school and high school students; Campus Leadership Institute; and professional services to assist corporations, organizations and government entities with strategic planning and communication enabling a more inclusive and global enterprise.

—*Information provided by Harmony, 2008 July*

In 1988, KCMO Mayor pro-tem Emanuel Cleaver and KCPL's president/CEO Drue Jennings led an 18-month effort to improve race relations and civic comity. Maggie Finefrock, now Director of The Learning Project and CRES CLO and was then co-director with Luther Washington. As part of the exploration of diversity, a Religions Task Force produced a covenant redrafted by Vern to be inclusive of all faiths, signed 1989 Aug 21 in Loose Park by members of 10 faiths. CRES was commissioned to prepare an account of religious diversity in the area for the Teacher/Student Study Guide.

The cantor at Beth Shalom initiated the Harmony Choral Celebration Concert, the only known interfaith concert in the United States that features both a mass choir and demonstration choirs.

Kansas City would not let Harmony go out of existence after 18 months, and it has become a permanent and increasingly valuable leader in educating about diversity in the metro area for business, government, the media, and congregations.

In 1996, Cleaver, now mayor, commissioned a task force on race relations. Maggie was chair of the religion/spirituality cluster, and Vern was assigned the task of drafting its recommendation, paragraph 6 of which, inspired by John Weston, called for the creation of a Congregational Partners Program to assist congregations of different faiths to build relationships of trust. Dozens of such partnerships were developed, at first as an independent program, then for a time under Harmony auspices, including one three-way with Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish congregations.

The 2001 Citistates Group reported that Harmony "consistently produces the nation's most ambitious array of programs aimed at building better relations across racial lines." That year CRES invited Harmony and NCCJ (see below) to cosponsor the area's first interfaith conference, The Gifts of Pluralism.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Diane Hershberger, then Harmony executive director, joined with others when asked by Jackson County to study the state of religious prejudice in the five county area; the Diversity Task Force, chaired by Vern with the Rev Rodger Kube, staff assistant, issued its report on Sep 10, 2002.

In 2005, after excellent staff preparation by Harmony and NCCJ, Vern, on the board of NCCJ, made the historic motion for the two organizations to merge. The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) was begun in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews to "fight" bigotry.

Kansas City's office began in 1953. In 1999 the name was changed to the National Conference for Community and Justice. Locally its expert summer programs for youth have included dealing with religious prejudice. For four years NCCJ and CRES staffed a day-long "Journey toward Understanding" for high school students to spent

a day exploring their different faiths. —  
*Additional perspective from CRES*

### HateBusters, Inc.

Box 442, Liberty, MO 64069  
hatebusters.com  
816-792-2272  
HateBuster@aol.com

HateBusters, developed by Ed Chasteen, now CRES Amity Shaman, helps people who have been hurt because someone hated them. "We never say no when asked for help. We get more publicity for the good guys than the bad guys. We teach people how to like people who are not like them. We bring people together." It hosts the Human Family Reunion dinners.

### The House of Menuha

801 E 77 St, KCMO 64113  
menuha.org; 816.444.2434

Annie Loendorf SCL and Diane R Hershberger, co-directors

House of Menuha was founded in 1992 as an independent non-profit corporation not affiliated with any religious or parent organization, when Annie Loendorf, a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, realized a great need for the women in the parish she served was to have a place and the time to care for themselves that was away from the never ending demands in their lives. "Menuha" is a Hebrew word meaning to rest in purposeful contemplation.

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of "Eat, Pray, Love", says that people turn to spirituality when their lives are in transition because fragility and dislocation make us more open to the wondrous power of grace moving deeply in our souls. House of Menuha is a spirituality center for women, a safe nurturing environment where women walk in their own unique mystery continuing to discover ever more deeply their piece of truth...their authenticity. Carl Jung says that a person's vision will become clear when they look into their heart. This kind of looking needs silence, stillness, reflections and then the challenge of giving voice to what is heard and what is felt. Menuha's mission is to provide the atmosphere, sacred space, companionship, guidance, and nourishment to look deeply into one's soul.

Through weekly "Reflection" programming when women gather to learn about self-care, spirituality, or dealing with change in their lives; through workshops addressing topics of purpose and self expression; through "Villager" programming teaching women to become more self-led and less dependent on cultural values of materialism, competition and self-centeredness; and through a "Pioneer Retreat" program supporting women who live with domestic abuse, addiction or homelessness, Menuha meets women where they are in their religious and personal journeys and equips them to bring spiritual wisdom and compassion more fully into their lives and the world.

### The Human Agenda

The Rev David E Nelson, DMin, president  
humanagenda.com; 816 453 3835

Dr Nelson has served as convener of the Interfaith Council and leads one of its interfaith book groups. His skills in teaching "Appreciative Inquiry" were evident at the 2001 "Gifts of Pluralism" conference. His "Vital Conversations" are designed for people of different faith perspectives to discuss both comfortable and difficult topics, news, movies, books, personal experiences. It is designed for people committed to celebrating the possibilities of the pluralistic society in which we live. David is a gifted speaker who enjoys addressing interfaith topics.

**Independence Ministerial Alliance**

816-373-5333 — josefwalker.com/ima/ima.htm  
The Rev Pat Miller, Chair  
motherpat@stmichaelschurch.org  
4000 Lee's Summit Road, Independence MO 64055

**Institute for Interfaith Dialog**

interfaithdialog.org; fozcan\_55@yahoo.com  
Fatih Ozcan, Kansas City Representative  
9903 Pflumm Rd, Lenexa, KS 66215; 913.206.6670

IID seeks to “unite the global communities through interfaith dialogue by sharing the differences and similarities in cultures and religions in an effort to achieve world peace.” IID is inspired by much-discussed Turkish figure Fetullah Gulen, who advocates a “moderate” form of Islam and whose influence has sparked new American interfaith activities

**Institute for Spirituality in Health**

Steven L Jeffers, PhD, 1948-2008, founder,  
*whose loss in 2008 August we mourn*  
Shawnee Mission Medical Center, 913-676-8104  
9100 W 74 Street, SM, KS 66204  
shawneemission.org/content/view/94/278/

The vision of the ISH is to deliver health care within an environment that values medical skills complemented by spirituality, often expressed in the language of faith. Led by religious, medical, civic, and business leaders of various faith traditions, ISH advocates addressing spiritual care in medicine and health care.

ISH provides community and professional education, publications and research on the topic of spirituality in the health care setting. In addition, the Institute leads interfaith prayer teams, which provide encouragement and support for SMMC associates and physicians, as well as local, state and national civic and religious leaders. Annual events such as the Community Prayer Breakfast, Physician/Clergy Conference, and symposiums on various topics allow community members to explore their spirituality and determine where it fits within their health care needs.

**Interfaith Coalition Against Bigotry**

jeverett3@mindspring.com  
An Ad Hoc organization to bring balance to the attacks on faiths by Michael Savage.

**Interfaith of Topeka**

interfaithoftopeka.org  
William Gitchell, President  
3015 SW Clark Ct., Topeka, KS 66604  
wgitchell@cox.net, 785-554-6735

**JCRB/AJC**

5801 W 115th Street #203  
Shawnee Mission, KS 66211  
jewishkc.org/agencies/jcrb  
913-327-8126, jcrbajc@jewishkc.org  
The Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee fights anti-Semitism, racism, and bigotry.

**Mainstream Voices of Faith**

mainstreamvoicesoffaith.com, 913.649.3326  
mainstream@mainstreamcoalition.com  
5350 West 94th Terrace Suite 103  
Prairie Village, KS 66207-2520  
MVOF is a religious coalition that promotes an inclusive approach to issues of faith and public policy through education and advocacy, with separation of church and

state a significant concern.

**Midwest Center for Holocaust Education**

5801 W 115th Street #106, Overland Park, KS 66211  
mchekc.org; 913-327-8190; mcekc.org;  
The Midwest Center of Holocaust Education teaches the history and lessons of the Holocaust to people of all races and faiths in the Midwest to prevent its recurrence and perpetuate understanding, compassion, and mutual respect.

**National Council of Jewish Women**

**Greater Kansas City Section**  
jewishkansascity.org/ir\_listing.html?id=3641  
5750 W. 95th St. Suite 118  
Shawnee Mission, KS 66207  
913 648-0747 ncjwkc@swbell.net  
Berenice Haberman, President

NCJW works through research, education, advocacy and community service to improve the quality of life for women, children and families, and strives to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all. Its annual February luncheon has been focused on Jewish Christian Muslim exchange.

**OpenCircle**

opencircleonline.com, 816.931.0738  
info@opencircleonline.com  
Among OpenCircle’s programs are occasional film showings of interfaith interest at the Tivoli Theatre.

**Pathways**

Pathways was founded in 1999 by Gene Flanery (flanerman@aol.com)  
Pathways promotes interfaith dialogue, foster respect for all religions, and celebrate diversity. Its members include the Hindu, Christian, Sikh, and American Indian traditions. Monthly meetings are held at the Cross Point Church in Shawnee, KS. While there is no official membership in Pathways, participants strive to achieve balance between the various participating faiths. Each year the group presents both an annual interfaith picnic in the summer and an annual dinner in January.

- Pathways Goals:
- \*To learn to listen with respect to those who are different
  - \*To promote racial harmony and fight against negative stereotyping in society
  - \*To provide a receptive place to speak about faith in God
  - \*To foster an attitude of respect for all religions
  - \*To educate others about the benefits of a multicultural perspective
  - \*To celebrate diversity in culture and appreciate religious differences.

**Person to Person**

communitypeace.com/id15.htm  
Mahnaz Shabbir and Sheila Sonnenschein offer a powerful presentation as Muslim and Jewish leaders and mothers about their friendship and learning about each other’s faith.

**Raytown Community Interfaith Alliance**

(816) 353-1708 -- http://rcifa.org/  
The Rev Joseph Weak, chair  
joe@raytowncc.org  
c/o Raytown Christian Church,  
6108 Blue Ridge Blvd., Raytown, MO 64133

**Salaam Shalom Celebration**

salaamshalomcelebration.org  
The annual KC area dinner originated as a twin to a gathering, or hafla, in Israel begun by Fouad Salman, Samir Dabit, and David Leichman in an effort to bring together Jews and Arabs. Fouad, Samir, and David come here and cook an amazing feast (with dietary laws observed). A clergy breakfast is also held. Both the first dinner in 2004 and the second in 2005 attracted 500 guests at Leawood’s Ironwoods Park Alpine Lodge. The next is planned in KCMO.

**Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition**

Jerry Rees, 913-568-4250  
Margaret Thomas, mgt84roe@aol.com  
sustainablesanctuary.org  
The mission of the Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition is to encourage sustainable living initiatives, i.e., “Care for Creation” in faith communities, through education about and promotion of sustainable actions.

We live in a time where there is denial of the global climate change that is fueled by humankind’s ever growing demands upon our Earth. The Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition does not accept as inevitable these wasteful ways continuing to cause ecological disasters to happen all around us. We also believe that if we are to change our collective behavior, we need to accept an accurate and positive vision of everyone’s reality.

This vision of reality celebrates all humankind as the stewards of this diversity of life on Earth and supporters of the natural systems on which all life depends. We believe that to cherish what has been created is our spiritual and moral responsibility – our ultimate responsibility to all children and all grandchildren.

We believe what we can do here and now is to build a coalition of faith communities that rapidly begin to reflect on what humankind is doing. We will gather, share, and urge others to join us in the same spirit that embraces change so stewardship and earthkeeping will soon become the sacred responsibilities for all.

**The Urantia Book Fellowship**

Susan Cook, 816-716-4944; solonia@juno.com  
415 Shannon Avenue, Smithville, MO 64089  
The Urantia Fellowship sponsors an on-line class in Interfaith dialogue. The intent of this course is learning to listen and exchange in healthy dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures. This course is 8 weeks long and involves reading before each “class.” We then meet via conference call to discuss learning opportunities, growth, difficulty, and ideas for further development. This course is in process and involves students from New York to Hawaii. Please contact us if you are interested in this course.

Coming up is an on-line course, “You want to learn about Different Religions?” This course will have different facilitators each week that represent their faith. A reading will be sent out the week before each conference call where we’ll then have the opportunity to be taught and ask questions. Why a conference call? So people and facilitators from different cities can come together. Please call for questions about enrollment.

**Please consult the CRES website for updates and corrections. Please send corrections to staff@cres.org.**

