

Statement of Resolution

At the timely initiative of His Holiness, Mahamandaleshwar Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda, leaders and members of many religious communities gathered in Vienna, Austria, for the International Conference on World Peace and the Message of Mahatma Gandhi, October 5, 2002.

This statement is the collective resolution of those present at the conference from many different religious and spiritual traditions. They reaffirm Mahatma Gandhi's message.

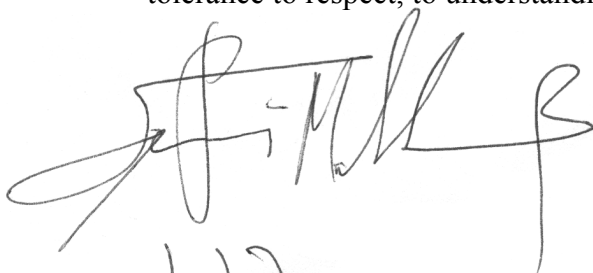
We still live in a world without peace. Our world is disfigured by ignorance, prejudice, violence, hunger, disease and environmental crises. Mahatma Gandhi's message challenges our personal lifestyle, our capacity to share community, our sense of a common humanity, and our responsibility for nature. Gandhi's teachings on all these points are too often either forgotten or neglected, since violence is seen at every level of our society: within families, in social and economic relations, and in threats of war and recourse to war.


We need to reclaim from the different spiritual and religious traditions, virtues of compassion, understanding and sharing. We recognise that we need to be self-critical especially where religion has been misused to justify violence or oppression. We of the various religious communities, hereby proclaim the desire to take a more active responsibility in preventing, solving and healing, and in asserting the principle of the sacredness of life - "Who says that my blood is redder than yours"?

We recognise the interconnectedness between the world of humans and the world of nature. Unless we care for the Earth and one another, we risk, in the words of the Earth Charter, "the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life". We also recognise our interconnectedness despite our differences in religion. For dialogue is not a luxury; it is essential to achieve the goal of enduring peace - peace between individuals, peace between communities and peace between different religions. With Gandhi we must acknowledge unity in diversity.

As one of the ways to strengthen this awareness we propose to organise a world pilgrimage in which members of the different spiritual traditions participate in a walk, from one place of spiritual significance, to another. Gandhian activism was nourished by prayer and pilgrimage and so we must not only pray alone, but walk the traditional routes together as well as forge new ones.

Today's conference met under the banner of Gandhi's words: Be the change you want to see
We feel the meeting has given hope and strengthened commitment to walk the road from tolerance to respect, to understanding and true love.


D. D. Moran
James Caputo


Swami Anand
Dwarkanath Sankar
John B. Taylor