NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (https://www.ncronline.org)

Interspirituality, confluence of spiritual truths the topics of international conference

Dan Morris-Young | Sep. 20, 2013

In what includes "the first reunion of religious leaders from one of the longest running inter-religious dialogues ever conducted," an international conference will focus on the confluence of world religious values Sept. 29 to Oct. 4 with 37 presentations by "spiritual pioneers and religious leaders" from around the world.

The Dawn of Interspirituality International Conference [1]'s theme of interspirituality "represents a new, rapidly burgeoning field based on the growing recognition that differences between the world religions are dwarfed by deeper commonalities at the core of all religions," an event press release stated.

"The nascent field of interspirituality also serves the growing 'spiritual but not religious' population, who are people seeking new spiritual pathways beyond traditional churches and religions," the release added.

"World religions are not locked in an unbridgeable gulf of conflict or discord" and can actually be "complementary expressions of a larger, unified field of human spiritual consciousness," planners emphasized.

High-profile presenters from a Catholic perspective at the conference, to be held at Cascadia Center near Mt. Vernon, Wash., include Trappist Fr. Thomas Keating, Sister of the Cross Lucy Kurien, and Fr. William Treacy.

Conference presenter Kurien is the founder of Maher, an interfaith organization that provides shelter and care to destitute and battered women and children in India. Maher has 24 homes in central and southern India that house almost 600 children and more than 180 women, according to her biography on the Satyana website.

Keating and Treacy, both in their 90s, are "the key impetus behind this conference," organizers said.

Keating was the mainstay of the well-known Snowmass dialogues that for three decades brought religious leaders and scholars from around the globe to St. Benedict's Monastery near Aspen, Colo., to study and discuss interreligious issues.

Treacy, a native of Ireland and a priest of the Seattle archdiocese for more than 60 years, co-founded the Cascadia Center, formerly Camp Brotherhood, in Skagit County, Wash., in 1966 with the late Rabbi Raphael Levine. The rabbi and priest for 14 years co-hosted an award-winning television program, "Challenge," that dealt with topical issues from an interfaith perspective.

The Northwest conference "may be more important than we realize, and I suspect that it will go far beyond our expectations," Keating said in the event press release.

"All who seek to participate in the experience of Ultimate Mystery -- through the practice of religion, love of nature, science, art, dedicated service of others, deep friendship -- are united in the same fundamental search," Keating said in the release.

"They can remain in their own chosen path or religious tradition and still contribute to the unprecedented awakening of trans-cultural values that has begun to take place throughout the world," he added. "The most significant contribution they can make is to cultivate the experience of oneness with Ultimate Mystery, oneness with all other human beings, and oneness with the cosmos."

The conference "is the first time that the alumni from the Snowmass dialogues are invited to gather at one time," the news release stated.

Organizers said those dialogue members had experienced "powerful conversations of the heart, and to their surprise, they discovered several key points of common agreement across the world religions. Having established this common ground, they cautiously began to explore their differences, and were even more surprised and delighted to discover that religious differences can be a source of mutual inspiration and illumination, rather than conflict."

An endorsement of the gathering by international human rights advocate Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu was posted on YouTube [2].

Primary organizers William Keepin and the Rev. Cynthia Brix of the Satyana Institute are working with Treacy and Keating. Keepin and Brix are visiting faculty members at Holy Names College in Oakland, Calif.

Based in Freeland, Wash., with offices in Boulder, Colo., the Satyana Institute is a "non-profit service and training organization" that works to "support individuals, communities, and organizations to combine inner work of the heart with outer service in the world," according to its website.

"Religion divided is spirituality betrayed," Keepin said. "Religion united is spirituality exalted."

"The deeper unity of religions neither denies nor belittles their important differences, nor does it produce quick or easy answers for resolving long-standing conflicts," Brix said. "What it does do is reveal a pathway beyond religious differences to profound harmony and collaboration among the religions."

Keepin and Brix told *NCR* that 155 people had registered by Sept. 15, and about 180 participants are expected to attend.

[Dan Morris-Young is an *NCR* West Coast correspondent. His email is dmyoung@ncronline.org [3].]

Source URL (retrieved on *08/25/2016 - 07:12*): https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/interspirituality-confluence-spiritual-truths-topics-international-conference

Links:
[1] http://www.satyana-conferences.org/
[2] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngkpKFj51V0
[3] mailto:dmyoung@ncronline.org