

ASIAN CONFERENCE ON RELIGION & PEACE

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Third Diversity Matters Forum 28th February to 2nd March 2005 held at Taj Bengal, Kolkata, India

It gives me immense pleasure to attend this August Forum and I consider it singular honour to address it as a speaker.

At the very outset permit me to congratulate the organizers of this Forum who have under taken great pains and put their best efforts to organize and make it a success. I highly value and appreciate their zeal and dedication in this regard. We should appreciate the efforts of all those who conceived the idea of forming this Forum and then translated / transformed the same into practice. The topic chosen for today's plenary "Improving understanding through Interfaith relations" is most appropriate.

We are living in 21st century and the world has turned into a global village. The people have been brought very close by the latest scientific inventions.

The media is playing a great role in bringing the people very close and well informed.

Common wealth is not confined to one continent only rather its boundaries stretch through out the world. It has many furs in the cap but the legal and judicial system prevalent there is excellent and remarkable.

Common wealth is like a beautiful bouquet of different races, colour and faiths.

The first and second Diversity Matters forums have done excellent initial work and have provided us guidance, ideas and excellent material for implementation. Thus in the Third Diversity Matters Forum we have to shoulder greater specific responsibilities to transform the earlier recommendations into practice through our sincere ceaseless efforts. For the achievement of noble objectives we have to establish permanent forum like commonwealth “Multi Faith Advisory Group”.

Through such permanent body we can proceed towards the achievement of noble ideals.

We have to create an environment of trust, co-operation, respect for each other faith and dignity. We have to shun all differences and adopt common code of ethics which will result in harmony and there will be dawn of new era in which the human kind can live in peace and tranquility.

We can not ignore the role of the religions but we have to make it positive and peaceful and desist from the path which leads to hostility, misunderstanding and distrust. For this we have to present ourselves as model for others to follow us. Our ideas should be action oriented.

Harmony, Peace, Tolerance, respect for all faiths and peaceful co-existence should be the main objectives of our sincere efforts.

Religion should not be mixed with politics and should not be used as stepping stone to reach in the corridors of power.

The hard liners, extremists, terrorists and radicals should not be allowed to play with destiny of human race and exploiting the holy name of religion.

This world can no longer afford the conflicts and wars waged in the name of religion.

We have to chalk out a common programme to frustrate the nefarious designs of these unscrupulous persons.

Duty is cast upon all the peace loving citizens of commonwealth in particular and world in general to put together their concerted and co-ordinated efforts for achieving religious harmony and Peace.

Instead of diversity we should search for common points among different religions and hold frequent interfaith dialogues for resolving the disputes and narrowing our differences.

All religions are like rivers flowing from different directions falling into the same ocean.

In other words the common theme of all religions is love for human kind, peaceful co-existence and fear of God.

No religion permits disharmony, terrorism, human subjugation, exploitation or taking the life of a fellow human being. Almighty God has termed human life very sacred.

It is an undeniable fact that despite the noble teachings of religions, the hard liners and extremists exist in every religion in different garbs.

Let me say that it is the need of the hour to develop common culture of peace and harmony, abiding by our own faiths and avoiding the religious and cultural conflicts. The policy of non interference should be our pivotal point.

We should hold frequent interfaith conferences, exchange views for understanding each other and improving relations through interaction. We should also tread the path of peace, amity, love and common living.

Instead of taking revenge we should adopt the policy of forgiveness as God Himself is a Great Forgiver. Thus we can win the hearts and souls of each other.

Let us pass on common message of love and peace to every corner of the world from the platform of “The Third diversity Matters Forum”.

Human beings are off springs of the same wedlock of Adam and Eve. They all are members of one large human family. They are the best of God’s creation.

Hence difference in religious faith should not make them enemies of each other. They have common destiny. God in the holy Quran said “O Men! I created you of man and woman and distributed you in tribes and families so that you be identified one from another. But he is to be more eminent who be more pious, before God. God is the wise, the all knowing.”

As a Muslim I am staunch believer of peace, human brotherhood and peaceful religious co-existence. God has termed in holy Quran, human life very sacred and precious and ordered the believers not to kill people.

He has equated the killing of one person with the killing of entire

Youth are our future thus it is our bounden duty to educate and train them to serve as peace corps in future.

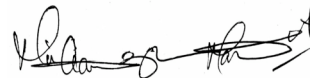
If we adopt the policy of non malignment and non interference, the obvious result would be peace, amity and love for each other.

We should visit together churches, mosques, temples, monasteries, synagogues, gurdwaras and other places of worship and try to keep our selves abreast of the teachings of different faiths.

We all should raise voice against all types of atrocities and injustice in the world and should help the aggrieved persons.

Let us use religion as a Panancea for world peace and harmonious living of the human kind and bring the people of different faiths closer under the umbrella of common wealth and set an example for others to follow it.

Permit me to appreciate and laud the efforts made by Australian Multi Cultural Foundation, Common Wealth policy studies unit, Common Wealth Foundation, the Statesman and the Monash Institute for study of Global Movements for arranging this excellent International Conference and bringing the people of different faiths closer. I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to me for addressing the distinguished participants of this historic conference.



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