2003

**Inter-Faith Dialogue Visit to Indonesia**

**27th – 30th October**

During Oct 27-30, the MFC sponsored 2 delegates to join the delegation led by Venerable Master Chin Kung, Pure Land Learning College, to participate in the 75th Anniversary of Youth Day in Indonesia, at which senior Indonesian Government officials, including the Vice-President, were present. The MFC delegates are Professor Sharon Bell, Pro-VC (Equity & Community Partnerships) and Mr. Abdul Jalal, the President of the Islamic Council of Queensland. This participation of MFC sponsored delegates to join the Ven. Master Chin Kung’s delegation is very consistent with the MFC’s vision to promote inter-faith dialogue and intercultural harmony, not only locally but also regionally (as in Indonesia) and internationally.

On November 27th, the MFC invited the Venerable Master Chin Kung to share his reflections on the outcomes of the inter-faith dialogue visit to Indonesia. This Dialogue, which also featured a talk by Mr. Abdul Julal, President, Islamic Council of Queensland attracted a wide range of participants from Griffith University and faith communities in Brisbane.

**Visit to the Philippines**

**24th November**

During Oct 24-Nov 3, 2003, the MFC Director visited the Philippines for several activities related to inter-faith dialogue and peace education. Prof. Toh met with various leaders and groups/communities involved in inter-faith dialogue, including Archbishop Capalla, one of the founders of the Bishops-Ulama Forum that has through the 90s promoted dialogue and reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in the conflict zones of Mindanao; the Silsilah Islamic-Christian Dialogue Movement; and the Ecumenical Commission of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines. Prof. Toh also gave the keynote address at the Peace Advocacy Convention of the Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines.

**Engaging Ideas: Multicultural Affairs Queensland Interchange Forum**

**20th October**

On October 20th, the MFC cooperated with Multicultural Affairs Queensland, the Qld Government’s lead agency for promoting multiculturalism, in hosting an MAQ Interchange Forum. The theme for this forum was Interfaith: Signs of Hope, and the MFC Director Professor Toh, was invited to give the keynote address. Professor Toh discussed his ideas on education for inter-faith dialogue, including the signs of hopes as well as challenges and barriers.

**Refugee Week**

**Official launching, Brisbane City Hall 17th October**

On Oct 17th, the MFC Director, Prof. Toh, participated in the multi-faith delegation that read a joint statement to express concerns and ideas on a more caring and compassionate treatment of refugees coming to Australia. This was part of the official opening of Refugee Week, organized by AustCare and the Brisbane City Council. Through his participation in the multi-faith prayer ceremony, Prof. Toh affirmed his commitment to values and policies that look after the well-being of refugees with compassion and justice. It was also a very relevant occasion to build contacts and networking with members of the Brisbane inter-faith community, and other agencies and organizations that support multiculturalism and multi-faith dialogue.

**Visiting Scholar: Dr. Solafa Goueli, Cairo University presented a lecture on Islamic Perspectives on Environmental Care**
**25th September**

In addition to facilitating the participation of Dr. Solafa Goueli, Cairo University in the Pathways to Peace Symposium, the MFC was also able to draw on Dr. Goueli’s expertise as an environmental and peace educator to contribute to the MFC as a visiting scholar. One important activity organized in this regard was a Dialogue on the theme on Islamic Perspectives on Environmental Care, which was jointly hosted by the MFC and the Griffith University Muslim Students Association. In her talk, Dr. Goueli shared her knowledge and insights on Islamic principles, values and teachings in protecting the environment.

**Pathways to Peace Symposium**

**27th & 28th September**

On September 27 and 28, 2003, the Total Health and Education Foundation, Warwick, Queensland, organized a symposium focusing on diverse Pathways to Peace. The symposium program included keynote addresses and many workshops looking into specific issues and strategies of peace education, conflict resolution education and cultivating inner peace. The MFC was invited to participate in the Symposium through opening its’ building to hold several workshop sessions as well as an art exhibition of the paintings of world famous sumi-e artist, Andre Sollier, who paints through his inspiration from Zen Buddhism and meditation. The MFC hosted the opening reception for Symposium speakers and presenters. The MFC Director was also the keynote speaker, giving an address entitled “Learning Compassion, Living Solidarity: Nurturing the Roots of a Peaceful World”, which examined the root causes of conflicts and violence worldwide and the role of education based on values of compassion and solidarity, to build a peaceful world and selves.

**Rhythm of Peace Celebration, Brisbane**

**21st September**

On September 21st, 2003, the MFC was also represented by its Director, Professor Toh, in the Rhythm of Peace Celebration organized by the United Nations Association of Australia in collaboration with the Brisbane City Council and many faith and community groups. The celebration included a youth march of flags of many countries represented in Brisbane’s multicultural population and musical and dance performances of several ethnic communities. Professor Toh joined the Mayor of Brisbane, the Hon. Tim Quinn, in giving a peace message at the Piazza venue in South Bank.

**International Day of Peace Celebrations**

**21st September**

The Multi-faith Centre celebrated the International Day of Peace on September 21st, declared by the United Nations in 2002 as a day to encourage all peoples and countries to observe a moment of
world unity for global ceasefire and non-violence. This event was a creative opportunity for individuals, communities and organizations to witness and participate in a multi-faith prayer for peace; listen to and share ideas in an inter-faith dialogue on faith and spirituality in building a culture of peace at all levels of life; and learn from educational displays exhibited by diverse faiths and peace advocates.

**Dialogues on Faith and Human Rights**

**26th August**

On Aug 26, the MFC held the first of its Dialogues in the series entitled Faith, Spirituality and Personal/Social Well-Being. This dialogue series reflects the MFC’s vision of deepening dialogue and sharing of spokespersons of diverse faiths on issues and problems relevant to daily lives of peoples and societies, locally and globally.

**Inter-Faith Dialogue on the Role of Faith/Religious Education in Building a Culture of Peace, Seoul**

**11th August**

After the IIPE conference, the Multi-Faith Centre co-sponsored with APCEIU an Inter-Faith Dialogue on the Role of Faith/Religious Education in Building a Culture of Peace on August 11, 2003. The venue for the dialogue was appropriately at Academy House, which has been a site for very important dialogues between political leaders over the continuing division and conflicts between North and South Korea and their respective allies. During the dialogue, fifteen scholars from Australia, South Korea, India, Canada, Indonesia and the Philippines shared insights and experiences on faith/religious education and inter-faith dialogue for promoting peace at local, national, international and global contexts.

**“Messages from Water” A Lecture by Dr. Masaru Emoto**

**9th August**

The MFC hosted a lecture by well-known Japanese researcher and educator, Dr. Masaru Emoto, Chairman, IHM General Research Institute, Japan on the theme of “Messages from Water”. Dr Emoto is a pioneering Japanese researcher who has been using Magnetic Resonance Analysis to study crystallized micro-cluster water. In his lecture, Dr. Emoto showed how water molecules (which make up 70% of our bodies and the surface of the Earth) are influenced by our thoughts, emotions, words, prayers, by sounds, chemicals and pollution.

**International Institute on Peace Education, Seoul**

**August 2003**

The Multi Faith Centre also sent a delegation to the 2003 International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) conference held in August in Seoul, South Korea. The MFC Director, Professor Toh and Tony Kitchen, Executive Officer for Curriculum, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, presented plenary papers related to the theme of Education for Healing and Solidarity. Professor Toh also conducted workshops focusing on globalization and the resolution of inter-cultural conflicts in the Philippines through dialogue and peace education. Other MFC delegates included Wei-Ying Ang, project manager, MFC, and Darmawan Mufti, a teacher in Al-Izhar High School, Jakarta, Indonesia. The IIPE 2003 was co-hosted by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) and the Peace Education Center of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.
Preparing Young People to Face Australia’s Long-Term Challenges

July 2003

In July, the MFC cooperated with the Eco-Centre and the Australian Collaboration, a consortium of leading Australian environmental and social agencies or NGOs to host a forum for young people. The forum encouraged participants to reflect on how to effectively prepare Australia’s young people to face Australia’s long –term challenges, including environmental protection and multicultural harmony. This activity affirmed the MFC’s link with the Eco-Centre, given the relevant relationship between ecology, peace and spirituality. Increasingly, diverse faiths are searching out the values and practices of environmental sustainability within their traditions and teachings.

United Nations University for Peace Courses/Workshops (Costa Rica and Thailand)

July 2003

During July, 2003, the MFC sponsored a total of six delegates from Griffith University to participate in short courses/workshops conducted by the United Nations University for Peace. Four attended workshops held in Bangkok, Thailand, and two delegates participated in a course in Costa Rica. The University For Peace was established by the UN General Assembly in 1980 “to provide humanity with an international institution of higher understanding for peace and with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations”.

Third Asia-Pacific Teacher Training Workshop on Education for International Understanding towards a Culture of Peace, Ichon, South Korea

July 2003

During July, 2003, the MFC Director, Professor Toh, was invited to present guest lectures and workshops for the over 30 teacher participants in the 3rd Asia-Pacific Teacher Training Workshop on Education for International Understanding towards a Culture of Peace, organized by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU). The EIU workshop was held at the UNESCO Youth Centre at Ichon outside Seoul, South Korea.

Australian Association for the Study of Religions Annual Conference

4th July - 6th July

The Conference consisted of the presentation of Academic papers on the study of religion and plenary sessions. Venue: Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University Conference Convenor: Patricia Blundell.

Requiem Exhibition

6th June – July 20th

In collaboration with Griffith Artworks, the Multi-Faith Centre sponsored the only Australian showing of works by war photographers who died or went missing while working in Vietnam and Indochina between 1945 and 1975. Requiem, organised by world-renowned photographers Tim Page and Horst Faas, was displayed at the QCA gallery.
**Humanitarian Aid Training Workshop and Red R and Architects Without Frontiers**

**16th & 17th June**

An intensive workshop for architects, planners, environmentalists, engineers and others conducted by Red R (Engineers for Relief). Major issues covered included: International Context of Disasters - Types of Emergencies, International Law (including Cultural, Heritage Protection, Overview of the Humanitarian System SPHERE Standards & Indicators Shelter & Site Planning

**Belief Exhibition**

**June**

The Belief project is a photo documentary project produced by Griffith University’s documentary photographer, Karen Kindt, that explores the lives of individuals from different religions as they interact in the wider community. It was first commissioned in May, 2002, as a part of the celebration of the opening of the Multi-Faith Centre. From June, 2003, in partnership with the Queensland Arts Council, and funded by Multicultural Affairs, Queensland, the MFC’s Belief project will be exhibited throughout Queensland to promote the ideals and values of multiculturalism.

**Venerable Master Chin Kung, Amitabha Buddhist Association.**

Address at the Commencement Service. A Multi-Faith Prayer Service for the commencement of the 2003 Academic Year.

**Abraham: "A Symbol of Hope and a Bond of Unity in Dialogue for Muslims and Christians".**

**Dialogue. 27 March 2003. Sponsored by the Queensland Education and Cultural Foundation and the Griffith University Multi-Faith Centre.**

**Judaism & Christianity: siblings or rivals, stepchildren or cousins?**