Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation
PREAMBLE

The vision of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the process of forgiving is vital if healing and reconciliation are to take place, as part of our collective efforts to seek justice, harmony and sustainable peace.

Fostering and practicing forgiveness has the power to transform memories and deep-seated responses to legacies of injustice, conflict and war. It can liberate people from being imprisoned in their pasts and long ingrained mental and emotional conditions. Faith and spiritual traditions guide and inspire us to awaken the best of our human potential, by practicing compassion, mercy, kindness, love, forgiveness and reconciliation, and to positively reshape our destinies.

Forgiveness is understood as an activity arising directly out of a compassionate consciousness, rooted in the awareness that we all belong to one human family. Compassion is an indispensable spiritual disposition in every faith, religion, dharma, or deen, as well as for our everyday human relations. Forgiveness is fostered by our experience of unconditional love and mercy, and an inner calling to live magnanimously and responsibly. It stems from our ability to see a larger context to our individual and collective existence, and from our impulse to lovingly seek and forge genuine and sincere bonds with one another as brothers and sisters.

To see forgiveness as a most profound expression and manifestation of our spiritual and human nature, and a catalyst for inward and outward change, is at the heart of the Charter. To love one’s neighbor as oneself means that the efforts to seek forgiveness for oneself are related to endeavors to forgive and receive forgiveness from the other. Our human journey of forgiveness and reconciliation can only be navigated freely and voluntarily. Sharing forgiveness can therefore only be inspired, not demanded.

Existing, inspirational examples of forgiveness compel us to practical and effective actions, leading to reconciliation, conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Forgiveness and reconciliation are an indispensable part of our journey to peace, in our interconnected and interdependent world and our quest for restorative justice.

Throughout history, acts of forgiveness have helped to de-escalate national and international conflicts, and to restore and sustain harmonious relationships in the daily lives of individuals, families, communities and societies. Insights from the lives of outstanding individuals and inspiring grassroots movements, combined with learning from a shared global heritage of sacred teachings, provide guidance to take forward the Charter’s work.

By offering paradigms of forgiveness, the Charter inspires commitment and directs activities that contribute to a growing practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, both in public processes and in private settings, in order to foster healing, harmony and peace in a wounded and fractured world.
PURPOSE
We, people, mindful of our shared humanity, commit to practise and nurture forgiveness and reconciliation, to foster healing, harmony, justice and sustainable peace in our world.

PRINCIPLES
1. The Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is the founding document of a worldwide movement of people, seeking forgiveness, reconciliation, justice and sustainable peace, being aware of the oneness of our human family.
2. We seek forgiveness, reconciliation and peace between individuals, families, communities, public institutions, states and religious traditions.
3. We believe that forgiveness and reconciliation are needed for peace to be sustainable, and to end cycles of violence.
4. We co-create reconciliation and peace, by seeking and receiving forgiveness. Forgiveness is the first step towards a deeper reconciliation.
5. We believe to be forgiving and to let-go of past burdens is in the hand of each of us.
6. We believe that forgiveness cannot be demanded from others, can only be freely offered and is for the benefit, freedom and inner peace of the one who forgives.
7. We believe forgiveness finds completion in becoming unconditional.
8. We aim to express respect, compassion, mercy, kindness and love in all our interactions with others.
9. We believe that peace is more than the absence of violence, and that it includes inner peacefulness as well as peacefulness with others and with the environment.
10. We join hands and reach out to others to free ourselves of destructive pasts, to heal personal wounds, to overcome conflicts and wars, in order to create a better future for all.
11. We draw upon the wisdom of the world's traditions, which include religious, spiritual, indigenous, and philosophical worldviews, as well as on our intuitive sense of compassion.
12. We seek cooperation with all interested and like-minded people, organisations, public institutions and the UN System, bearing in mind the interdependence and unity of humanity.
13. We affirm the equal rights and responsibilities of all women and men, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities.
14. We practice open inclusiveness of all, regardless of gender, traditions, affiliations, and ethnicity.
15. We are committed to non-violence and restorative justice, always seeking peaceful resolutions to conflicts and wars, even if self-defence may be necessary in some circumstances.
16. We support all efforts and initiatives of healing, reconciliation and peacemaking, and encourage intercultural, interreligious, and interethnic dialogue, understanding and cooperation.
17. We seek to foster harmony within our Earth community and unity amongst our human family, valuing the interconnectedness of all life.
18. We welcome as members and supporters all individuals, organisations and institutions who subscribe to the Preamble, Purpose, and Principles. We will seek affiliation with institutions and networks that support the Vision, Purpose, Aims and Objectives of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

Web Site: http://www.charterforforgiveness.org
Twitter: http://twitter.com/charterforgive
Email: office@charterforforgiveness.org
Dr. William F. Vendley
Co-convenor and Co-Chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Dr. Vendley is the Secretary General of Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action for peace by working to advance multi-religious consensus on positive aspects of peace as well as concrete actions to stop war, help eliminate extreme poverty and protect the earth. He is a member of its World Council which consists of 60 senior religious leaders from all continents. He coordinates the activities and projects of Religions for Peace's 92 national and 5 regional offices. Dr. Vendley is an advisor to a number of governments on matters related to religion and peace. He advises US President Barack Obama through his service on the multi-religious Cooperation and International Affairs Task Force of the White House Faith-Based Council. He was appointed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and re-appointed by Secretary Kerry as one of ten members of the US State Department’s Advisory Committee on Strategic Partnership with Civil Society and he is a Co-chair of the State Department’s Religious and Foreign Policy Working Group. Dr Vendley is a recipient of the UNICEF Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Josef Boehle
Director, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Dr. Josef Boehle is a Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham, UK. He received a postgraduate degree in Theology from the University of Tübingen, Germany and received his PhD from the University of Birmingham in 2001 for his thesis on Joint-religious Co-operation in a Global Age.

He has worked for international interreligious organisations and helped to organise major conferences and summits addressing interreligious, intercultural and interreligious issues. From 2005-2010 he was a member of a UK Government (DFID) sponsored Research Consortium on ‘Religions and Development’. Dr Boehle previously participated in a 4 year process of developing the United Religious Initiative Charter (1996-2000). He was the European Coordinator of the URI from 1997-2000. The URI Charter has been distributed and is actively consulted in many countries around the world.

Dr. Boehle was also a coordinator of the development of the Concept Note of the Interactive Hearing with Civil Society of the 2007 High-level Dialogue of the UN General Assembly on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace. His work and teaching focuses now on Religion, Politics and Peacebuilding.

Project Development & Coordination

Bhai Sahib, Mohinder Singh, OBE, KSG
Co-convenor and Co-Chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Bhai Sahib took early retirement in 1989 after working for 27 years as a civil engineering and housing expert in East and Central Africa, to devote the rest of his life to selflessly serving humanity. Since 1995 he is responsible for the day to day running of probably the biggest Sikh place of worship in Europe where he spends on average some 12 hours a day. He received in 2010 the official religious title of ‘Bhai Sahib’ from the Sikh fraternity’s apex organisation, in recognition of his work in faith propagation through intra and interfaith fields, coupled with his outstanding contribution towards conservation and restoration of Sikh historical shrines. This is the first time in history that a British Sikh has been conferred this award.

Dr. Vendley is a visionary in the fields of faith propagation, education, intra and interfaith. A recipient of the Juliet Hollister Award from the Temple of Bhai Sahib is a member of the Elijah Board of World’s Religious Leaders (EBWRL), a former member of the Fetzer Institute’s Advisory Committee (FAC) on Religions and Spiritualities, a member of the European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL) and member of the Department for International Development’s (DfID) Faith Working Group. He is Chair and Trustee of the Museum of World’s Religions (MWR-UK) Working Group, Patron of United Religions Initiative (URI - UK), member of Birmingham Faith Leaders Group (BFLG). Bhai Sahib is also an ambassador for the Globalisation for Common Good Initiative and received its third annual award in 2014.

In 2012 he was made a Papal Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great in recognition of his dedicated work for Roman-Catholic Sikh relations and for his enthusiastic commitment to working for peace among people of all faiths. In 2015 he was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his outstanding and invaluable work over forty years to promote peace and coexistence by bringing people of different faiths together to contribute to the common good of humanity.

He has been awarded Honourary Degrees from Birmingham City University in 2002, the University of Birmingham in 2006 and the University of Aston in 2014 for services to religious faith propagation, community service, education and research.
Rabbi David Rosen CBE
Co-chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, is the International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Director of its Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding. He is a past chairman of IJCC, the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the broad-based coalition of Jewish organizations representing World Jewry to other religions. Rabbi Rosen is Honorary Advisor on Interfaith Relations to the Chief Rabbi of Israel; serves on its Commission for Interreligious Dialogue; and represents the Chief Rabbi on the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land. He is an International Co-President of Religions for Peace and serves on its Executive Committee; a founder of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel that embraces some seventy organizations in Israel involved in interfaith relations; is Honorary Advisor on Interfaith Relations to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel; serves on its Commission for Interreligious Dialogue; and represents the Chief Rabbi on the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land.

Rev Kosho Niwano
Co-chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Rev Kosho Niwano is President-designate of Rissho Kosei-kai and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace. She serves on the Executive Committee of Religions for Peace. President-designate Kosho Niwano was born in Tokyo as the first daughter of President Nichiko Niwano. After receiving a law degree from Gakushuin University, she studied at Rissho Kosei-kai’s Gakurin seminary. She is currently devoted to studying the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and shares the teachings with members who visit the Great Sacred Hall for worship services and special events. She also actively promotes interreligious cooperation domestically and internationally in her capacity as president-designate of Rissho Kosei-kai attending interfaith congresses. She is a councilor of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan), a board of director of Religions for Peace Japan, co-moderator of Rissho Kosei-kai and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace. She serves on the Executive Committee of Religions for Peace. President-designate Kosho Niwano was born in Tokyo as the first daughter of President Nichiko Niwano. After receiving a law degree from Gakushuin University, she studied at Rissho Kosei-kai’s Gakurin seminary.

Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah
Co-chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah is President, Forum for Peace in Muslim Societies, Abu Dhabi, and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace. He serves on the Executive Committee of Religions for Peace. As a life-long advocate for peace, Shaykh Bin Bayyah is the President of the Forum of Peace in Muslim Societies and one of today’s most well respected Islamic scholars. He was born on 1935 in eastern Mauritania. He studied sacred sciences in the Mauritania centers of learning known as Mahadhir. He then studied law at the Faculty of Law in Tunisia and was trained in Tunisian courts in 1961. Bin Bayyah has served in many distinguished positions over the years, including but not limited to Judge at the High Court of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the first Minister for Islamic Affairs and Education, Minister of Justice and the Faculty of Law in Tunisia and was trained in Tunisian courts in 1961. Bin Bayyah has served in many distinguished positions over the years, including but not limited to Judge at the High Court of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the first Minister for Islamic Affairs and Education, Minister of Justice and now as Co-Chairman of the Forum of Peace in Muslim Societies. He is the President of the Forum of Peace in Muslim Societies, Abu Dhabi, and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace.

Editorial Panel

We have established an Editorial Panel to oversee the drafting and writing of the Charter text. Religious leaders, academics and leaders of International NGOs have agreed to join the Editorial Panel to ensure that the Charter text will have the envisioned high quality and global appeal - that the Charter text will be an aesthetic expression of the values inherent in the sacred teachings of the major World Religions.

Editorial Panel Members:

Bhai Sahib Moolinder Singh, Co-convenor, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Biography is on page 6 of the brochure.

Dr William F. Vendley, Co-convenor, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Biography is on page 7 of the brochure.

Dr Josef Boehle, Director, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation and Editorial Panel Director - Biography is on page 7 of the brochure.

...continued overleaf (pages 10-13)
Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Portsmouth, UK

In October 2014 Professor Ahluwalia joined the University of Portsmouth as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation). Professor Ahluwalia holds a Bachelor and Master of Arts from the University of Saskatchewan, and completed his PhD at Flinders University. He was subsequently at the University of Adelaide for 14 years, finishing as Professor of the Politics Department. Professor Ahluwalia has previously been a Visiting Professor at the University of California, and Professor with the Goldsmiths College at the University of London, where he was also Director of the Centre for Postcolonial Studies. His main research interests lie in the areas of African studies, social and cultural theory, in particular post-colonial theory and the processes of diaspora, exile, migration, and the complexities of identity formation. His work is internationally renowned for breaking down disciplinary boundaries and challenging orthodoxy. Professor Ahluwalia is a prolific publisher, both in terms of volume and prestige. He is the sole author of four books: Politics and International Relations: Theories of Power and the State; and holds a Bachelor and Doctor of Philosophy in Post-colonial Theory: African Inflections; Post-colonialism and the Politics of Charities, change and global change. Its programmes focus on three areas: Trust building, Ethical leadership and Sustainable living.

Professor Pal Ahluwalia was appointed a UNESCO Chair in Transnational journals: Social Identities; African Identities; and Sikh Formations. In October 2008, Professor Ahluwalia was appointed a UNESCO Chair in Post-structuralism’s Colonial Roots. He is also the editor of three Routledge terms of volume and prestige. He is the sole author of four books: Politics and International Relations: Theories of Power and the State; and holds a Bachelor and Doctor of Philosophy in Post-colonial Theory: African Inflections; Post-colonialism and the Politics of

The Rt Rev Dr Bishop Christopher Cockworth, Bishop of Coventry, UK

The Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cockworth was consecrated as the 9th Bishop of Coventry on 3 July 2008. Prior to becoming Bishop he was the Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. The Bishop of Coventry is the senior leader of the Church of England in Coventry and Warwickshire. He read Theology at the University of Manchester and received his PhD in 1989. Bishop Cockworth has served in parish and chaplaincy ministry and in theological education, latterly as Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. In 2010 he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of London for his services to education. He has written a number of books and articles in the area of Christian theology and worship, and his books include: Holding Christian Speech, the rite of the Church and Spirit being shortlisted for the 2011 Michael Ramsey Prize. Dr Cockworth was consecrated as the 9th Bishop of Coventry, UK in January 2013.

Dr Marius Felderhof, Museum of World’s Religions (UK), University of Birmingham, UK

Dr Marius Felderhof was born in Holland and emigrated with his parents, brothers and sisters when he was nine to Scotland. He studied Philosophy and Theology in Canada and Scotland, and received a PhD in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Wales, Swansea. He is a licentiate of the Church of Scotland and served in the parish of Bremptontone for one year before returning to teach Systematic and Philosophical Theology at St Mary’s College, The University of St. Andrews. He then went to Westhill College, Selby Oak, Birmingham and served for a number of years as Head of Religious and Theological Studies at Westhill College. The College and his department were integrated into the University of Birmingham and his department of Religion and Philosophy in 2007. In 2005 he was succeeded by the University to the City of Birmingham to act as the drafting secretory to the Agreed Syllabus Conference which devised the groundbreaking 2007 Syllabus for Religious Education. This syllabus committed all the major faiths in the City to supporting teachers in developing 24 depositions in young people on the basis of their scriptures, traditions and practices. He has published many articles relating to Religion and to Religious Education and is responsible for authoring and editing four books. He continues to advise the City of Birmingham on its RE provision as a member of its Standing Advisory Commission for Religious Education. Currently, Dr Felderhof is an honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Theology and Religion and the Executive Director of the Museum of World’s Religions project in Birmingham.

Dr Omnia Marzouk, President, Initiatives of Change International, 2011-2016, UK

Originally from Egypt and having lived most of her life in Australia and Britain, Dr Omnia Marzouk has been working as Consultant in Peacebuilding Initiatives of Change International (IofC International) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working for peace and human security worldwide by building trust across the world’s divides. It has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and Participatory Status at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It is a world wide movement of people of diverse cultures and background, committed to addressing world needs focusing on the link between person change and global change. Its programmes focus on three areas: Trust building, Ethical leadership and Sustainable living.

Dr Omnia Marzouk was elected at the first woman President of Initiatives of Change International in 2011 and served in this role until 2016. Previous Presidents include Professor Rajmohan Gandhi (India), Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun (Algeria) and Mr Cornelio Sommaruga (Switzerland) who remains Honorary President. Initiatives of Change International (IofC International) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working for peace and human security worldwide by building trust across the world’s divides. It has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and Participatory Status at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It is a world wide movement of people of diverse cultures and background, committed to addressing world needs focusing on the link between person change and global change. Its programmes focus on three areas: Trust building, Ethical leadership and Sustainable living.
Rev. Kosho Niwano, 
**President Designate of Rissho Kosei-kai, Japan**
- Biography is on page 6 of the brochure.

Professor Anantanand Rambachan, 
Professor of Religion, St Olaf College, USA

Professor Anantanand Rambachan is Professor of Religion, Philosophy and Asian Studies at Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, USA, where he has been teaching since 1985. Prof Rambachan has been involved in the field of interreligious relations and dialogue for over twenty-five years, as a Hindu participant and analyst. He has contributed to numerous consultations and discussions convened by national and international organizations concerned with interreligious issues. He is very active in the dialogue programs of the World Council of Churches, and was a Hindu guest and participant in the last four General Assemblies of the World Council of Churches, in Vancouver, Canada, Canberra, Australia, Harare, Zimbabwe and Puerto Alegre, Brazil. He is currently acting as President-Moderator of Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACPR), Co-President of Religions for Peace International, as well as Chairmen of Center for Dialogue and Cooperation among Civilizations (CDC), and a member of the World Council of Religions for Peace in Jakarta. He is also a member of Group for Strategic Vision Russia – Islamic World, and member of Leadership Council of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network (UNSDSN). He recently initiated the creation of Indonesia's Movement to Save the Earth (Indonesia Bergken Sanattan Bumi) and acts as Chairman of the Movement's Amazing Committee. He obtained both Master and Doctoral degrees from the Interdepartmental Program in Islamic Studies, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), in 1998 and 1991 consecutively.

Rabbi David Rosen, 
International Director of Interereligious Affairs, AJC, Israel
- Biography is on page 6 of the brochure.

H.E. Dr Din Syamsuddin, 
Leader, Muhammadiyah; 
Moderator of Asian Conference of Religions for Peace; Chairman, Centre for Dialogue and Cooperation among Civilizations, Indonesia

Professor Dr Din Syamsuddin is a prominent Muslim leader from Indonesia. He is a professor of Islamic Political Thought at National Islamic University, Jakarta. He served as President of Muhammadiah, the largest modernist Islamic organization in Indonesia from 2001 to 2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015. He has been active in interfaith dialogues and cooperations, as he initiated the creation of and becoming President of the Indonesia Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015, as well as President of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) during 2014-2015. He is a member of the Theological Education Committee of the American Academy of Religion. In April 2008, Professor Rambachan, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered the distinguished Lambeth Lecture at Lambeth Palace, London. He has contributed to a series of HIV/AIDS Forums based in Jakarta. He is also a member of Group for Strategic Vision Russia – Islamic World, and member of Leadership Council of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network (UNSDSN). He recently initiated the creation of Indonesia’s Movement to Save the Earth (Indonesia Bergken Sanattan Bumi) and acts as Chairman of the Movement’s Amazing Committee. He obtained both Master and Doctoral degrees from the Interdepartmental Program in Islamic Studies, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), in 1998 and 1991 consecutively.

**Professor Garrett Thomson, CEO, Guerrand-Hermes Foundation for Peace, UK and USA**

Professor Garrett Thomson is the Guerrand-Hermes Foundation for Peace CEO as well as Director of Research. He received his DPhil from Oxford University. Currently he is Compton Professor of Philosophy at the College of Wooster, USA. He was formerly the CEO of the World Subud Association in 2005-2010. Garrett is the author of numerous books including Needs; Kant; Introduction to Modern Philosophy; and a series of introductory texts on Descartes, Locke, Aristotle, and Kant. He co-edited the six-volume The Longest Standard History of Philosophy. His other recent works include Una Introduzione a la Pratica de la Filosofa, On Philosophy and On the Meaning of Life. Most recently, Garrett has co-authored books as part of the GPHP’s research team.

**Maria Voce, President, Focolare Movement, Italy**

Maria Voce was elected president of the Focolare Movement on 7 July 2008 by the General Assembly of the Focolare. She is the first focolarin to succeed the founder, Chiara Lubich, who died on the 14th of March of the same year. She was born in Apollo Calabro, Cosenza, Italy, on 16 July 1937, the first of seven children. Her father was a doctor; her mother was a housewife. During her last year of law school in Rome (1959) she met a group of focolarini at the university and was fascinated by their Gospel witness. Upon completion of her studies, she became the first woman lawyer in her city’s court system. Later she studied Theology and Canon Law. In 1963, she felt the unexpected “overwhelming” call of God to follow in the way of Chiara Lubich and she immediately responded. From 1964 to 1972 she was in Sicily, in the Focolare Centres of Syracuse and Catania. From 1972 to 1978 she belonged to Chiara Lubich’s personal secretariat and for the following five years she was in the Focolare Centre of Istanbul where she established ecumenical and interreligious relationships, especially with the patriarch of Constantinople, Dimitris I, and with numerous metropolitanos including the now Patriarch Bartholomew I, as well as with representatives of various Churches. As a law expert, from 1995 she was a member of the Abu Alaa School, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies chaired by Chiara Lubich. From 2000 she was also co-responsible for the international commission, “Communion and Law,” a network of academics and professionals involved in law. From 2002 until their approval, which came in 2007, she worked directly with Chiara Lubich in updating the General Statutes of the Movement. On 24 November 2009 Benedict XVI appointed her as a Consultor for the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Maria Voce was re-elected as President of the Focolare Movement for a second consecutive term in September 2014.
1. Formation of editorial panel
An international editorial panel will be established to oversee and direct the writing of the Charter text.

2. Setting up of advisory council
As soon as feasible, an advisory council will be established and convened to include different sectors: religious leaders, scholars and NGO leaders, amongst others.

3. Research component of the project
Research into similar charters, initiatives and best practices will inform the development of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation text and the activities associated with the Charter.

4. Project development phase
- to establish an editorial panel to direct the Charter drafting process
- to consult and develop a draft of the Charter text
- to seek collaboration with like-minded organisations and communities
- we held a Symposium in April 2014 and are developing a network of partner organisations to consult and develop a draft of the Charter text
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5. Project implementation phase
The project implementation phase will include collecting feedback from the consultation process, holding a second Symposium/Consultation, finalising the Charter text, developing joint activities, advancing research projects with partner organisations and launching the Charter internationally.

6. Engagement with governments and global institutions
We will seek engagement with governments and global institutions during the final part of the Charter drafting process (once the Charter text is being finalised and a sufficient network of partner organisations has been established), to inform public policies and strategies, nationally and internationally, in order to make a significant contribution to overcoming and healing the legacies of conflicts and wars. We propose the establishment of a World Day of Harmony Week.

[Executive Summary]

In the early Charter development phase, Forgiveness and Reconciliation were identified as being closely related values and both being necessary to achieve sustainable peace. Faith and spiritual traditions have long guided us and helped us to remember and work towards the overcoming of our past, and towards the development of an international society of peace and justice.

The Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the concept of forgiveness is fundamental to the creation of a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. The Charter will be a clear and comprehensive statement of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the values and principles that underpin them. It will set out the framework for a global movement for forgiveness, reconciliation, and sustainable peacebuilding.

The Charter will be a living document, continually updated and developed as the world changes. It will be a tool for education, advocacy, and action, and will be available in multiple languages.

The Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is a call to action for all people of good will to work together towards a more just and peaceful world. It is a statement of our common goals and aspirations, and a commitment to working towards a better future for all.

The Charter will be launched in 2016, and will be a global movement for forgiveness, reconciliation, and sustainable peacebuilding. It will be a tool for education, advocacy, and action, and will be available in multiple languages.

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Outcomes and Intended Audiences of the Charter Project

The initial targets and outcomes to be achieved have been described above under the Project Development Phase. The Project Implementation Phase will finalise the draft Charter text, develop joint activities (including further research projects) with partner organisations and launch the Charter internationally. We propose the establishment of a World Day of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, to be held annually during World Interfaith Harmony Week.

The advisory council, as well as the international consultation process devised to draft the Charter text, will bring a wide range of expertise together. This collaborative effort will help to increase understanding amongst the participating organisations and beyond, about the awareness, motivations and conditions for a ‘Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation’.

The research and consultation process will identify many individuals and communities for whom the act of forgiving and being forgiven has had a healing and restorative effect, as well as those who are currently in, or are emerging from, conflict situations. The lack or absence of forgiveness and reconciliation affects people at all levels, from personal, marital and domestic realms to local, national and international arenas. Thus the primary audiences will span:

- Ordinary individuals in the context of home, family, neighbourhood and workplace and associated organisations which support, guide and govern life in these domains.
- Schools/universities/education institutions and religious/spiritual communities, which help to shape the values by which people live.
- Local, national and international guiding institutions.
- Media institutions which influence mindsets, habits, opinions and inclinations.

There are many ways to communicate the work on, and the results of, the Charter. During the chartering process a wide range of individuals and organisations will be consulted and asked to distribute through their networks the draft charter text. A website and a range of multimedia resources will be developed. It is intended to work closely with partner organisations to reach out through media networks to a global audience.

Once the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation has been successfully launched there will be the further need to communicate with participating organisations, and to organise joint activities. It will also create the possibility for further research projects (case studies) around aspects of forgiveness (e.g. forgiveness and political reconciliation processes, peacebuilding and conflict resolution; forgiveness and community relations, human well-being; forgiveness and education; forgiveness and economics).

The proposed Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation also has a link to the proposed Museum of the World Religions (UK) project in Birmingham and the value-centred Religious Education work of Dr Marius Felderhof (the Director of the Museum project) at the University of Birmingham.
The Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation project has been initiated by Bhai Sahib, Bhai Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia, OBE, KSG, the Spiritual Leader of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ), and the Chairman of the Nishkam Group of Charitable Organisations, based in Birmingham, UK.

Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ) Birmingham UK, is a multifaceted faith-led, not for profit, benevolent organisation. Its Vision is to humbly and selflessly serve the one Almighty God & all His creation. Its mission is to practice and propagate the Sikh Dharam (religion), seeking wellbeing and flourishing of all humanity, 'Sarbat da Pala'.

The Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Differing faiths, common action.

Vision
The world's religious communities cooperate effectively for peace.

Since its founding in 1970, Religions for Peace has been guided by the vision of a world in which religious communities cooperate effectively for peace, by taking concrete action.

Religions for Peace is committed to leading efforts to advance effective multi-religious cooperation for peace on global, regional, national and local levels while ensuring that the religious communities organized on these same levels assume and exercise appropriate leadership and ownership of these efforts.

Mission
Religions for Peace advances common action among the world's religious communities for peace.

Multi-religious cooperation for peace is the hallmark of Religions for Peace. This cooperation includes but also goes beyond dialogue and bear fruit in common concrete action. Through Religions for Peace, diverse religious communities discern “deeply held and widely shared” moral concerns, such as transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, advancing human development and protecting the earth. Religions for Peace translates these shared moral concerns into concrete multi-religious action.
It is forbidden for a person to be cruel and not grant pardon. One should rather easily forgive and not easily grow angry, and when the offender requests forgiveness he should forgive with a full heart and generous spirit. Even if he caused him distress and committed many offenses against him, he shall not exact revenge or bear a grudge. This is the way of the Israelite people and their principled heart. [Hilkhot Teshuva 2:10, Maimonides]

'Where there are lies and deceit - there is sin; Where there is greed - there is famine, death and destruction; Where there is forgiveness - there is God himself.'

Bhagat Kabir Ji

[Sacred Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, ang.1372]

'But if you pardon and exonerate and forgive, Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful'

[Qur’an, 64: 14]

'God, You are always forgiving, and always merciful'

Fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji

[Sacred Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, ang.713]

'And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.'

[Mark, 11:25, New Testament]

The positive proof that the aspirant is centred in God is that he ceases to hate any person or object, and that good qualities such as love, forgiveness, patience, forbearance go on increasing in him.

Si-Anandayi Mi (1916 - 1992)

'Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong'

Malalana Gandhi (1869 – 1948)

As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew it I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

'There is no future without forgiveness'

Desmond Tutu (born 1931)

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Charter for
Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Statement of Vision and Purpose

The vision of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the activity of forgiving is vital if healing and reconciliation is to take place, as part of our collective efforts to seek restorative justice and sustainable peace.

Fostering and practicing forgiveness has the power to transform deep-seated responses to memories and legacies of injustice, conflict and war. It can liberate people from being imprisoned in their pasts and long ingrained mental and emotional conditions created by such legacies. Faith and spiritual traditions have long guided us and inspired us to awaken the best of our human potential, to practice love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation, and to reshape our destinies.

(From the Statement of Vision and Purpose, first two paragraphs)