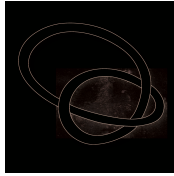


World 2 Interfaith
Religions 0 Leaders in the
Summit 1 G8 Nations



Sommet 2 Réunions des
des religions 0 dirigeants interreligieux
du monde 1 dans les pays du G8

History of Interfaith Leaders' Summits

On January 19, 2009, the 2010 Interfaith Partnership was officially constituted as the body that, along with the University of Winnipeg, is hosting the 6th annual Interfaith Leaders' Summit. The Partnership then constituted a Steering Group to carry forward the logistics of planning this complex national and international event. The Partnership and the Steering Group both of which are chaired by the General Secretary of The Canadian Council of Churches, have been meeting regularly as have the Statement Writing Team, the Communications Team and the Resource Team. An ad hoc meeting to focus on the accompanying public engagement strategy has also occurred. The CCC Commission on Justice and Peace is supporting the project. Also of service to the initiative are a Protocols and Logistics committee based in Winnipeg. There is an International Continuance Committee composed of members of nations/faith bodies who have hosted previous summits and Canada has taken a leading role in that body.

The purpose of the summits, from their inception in 2005, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Rev. Jim Wallis, a leading American evangelical, has been to raise the voices of the faith leaders of the world in unity and in a call for justice for the vulnerable peoples of the world. The global faith leaders have gathered to remind the G8 of its responsibilities to the poor (with particular focus on the need to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals), the environment and the state of peace in the world and have committed themselves and their people to further effort in these life-giving directions. Some academic sources say that prior to the 2008 economic crisis, the G8 was complying with about half of its promises on behalf of the globe's people (www.g7.utoronto.ca).

All groups and committees of this initiative in Canada have membership from many of the various faith traditions and partners of the 2010 Interfaith Partnership (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Baha'i, Aboriginal) and many of the denominations of the CCC. Such faith based organizations as World Vision and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank are also partners as is the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto, the leading G8 academic research group in the world.

The date of the Interfaith Leaders' Summit is June 21 to 23, 2010, with a first-ever interfaith media forum to be held on June 21 also at the University of Winnipeg.

A number of other related events, including both an Interfaith media forum and a Human Rights conference are being planned for both Winnipeg and Huntsville by local groups with support and consultation with the 2010 Partnership. There are other civil society responses going on across the country.

The G8/G20 will be meeting June 25 to 27 in Huntsville and the date of the Interfaith Leaders' Summit was chosen to facilitate a possible meeting of 6-7 faith leaders with the political leaders. The request for this meeting has been submitted, several times, to the Canadian G8 office and is under consideration.

Numerous Canadian "firsts" in this initiative include the formation of an Interfaith Partnership, the involvement of a G8 research group which gives the Partnership access to all the data on G8 commitments and the lack of compliance with them, an interfaith media forum, the ability to file, preserve and then forward all documents to the next hosting country, a possible visit of faith leaders with the political leaders and very important, the early release of the Statement which is a part of such summits and the public engagement strategy to accompany it.

2010 Interfaith Partnership

On October 14, at a press conference which resulted in a substantive article in the *Toronto Star* newspaper, the 2010 statement “A Time for Inspired Leadership and Action” was released to CCC denominations, all the partners in the 2010 Partnership, all faith communities and the world. It is of note that the 8 other regional church councils of the world are all taking deep interest in this initiative and will be using the statement in their regions.

It is the hope of the 2010 Partnership that all denominations and faith communities will take the Statement (*en anglais ou en français*) and send it throughout their networks to their people. Discussion groups and focus groups could be planned in all congregations, parishes or communities. A key feature of the public engagement strategy will be the encouragement, with appropriate resources available, of an interfaith dinner being hosted in each federal riding in the country. Discussion groups and focus groups can be used as an alternative to a dinner if that is more feasible. Ecumenical and interfaith bodies across the country are being asked to get together, to meet together to discuss the issues of the Statement—poverty, environment, and peace and security—and invite their local federal MP to eat with them, to be presented with a copy of the Statement and to think forward to how Canada can be a strong moral voice for all who suffer in our world.

2010 Interfaith Leaders’ Summit—Governing Board Report, November 2009