

ACROSS BOUNDARIES MULTIFAITH INSTITUTE

***Giving voice to the pluralities
of human experience***

CASE FOR SUPPORT

DECEMBER 2004

OUR VISION

To strengthen civil society and enhance pluralism in Canada and globally by promoting dialogue and exchange among faith traditions and between secular and religious perspectives

OUR MISSION

To increase knowledge and understanding of the contemporary world's religious and secular traditions and beliefs through education, publications and public forums

ACROSS BOUNDARIES MULTIFAITH INSTITUTE is a not-for-profit organization

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WHY ACROSS BOUNDARIES IS SO NECESSARY TODAY

A secure pluralistic society requires communities that are educated and confident both in the identity and depth of their own traditions and in those of their neighbours.

– His Highness the Aga Khan

Is religion the problem?

Industrialized nations are becoming increasingly complex, multiracial and international societies in which the spiritual and the secular are no longer easily separable and distinct. Since 9/11, religion in particular has become an important player on the international political stage. But even before these recent events, the perception of our so-called secular age has been slowly eroding over the past decades as spiritual and religious movements — both traditional and less familiar — have gained tremendous momentum in the West. The worlds of business, politics, psychology and the environment have been quick to respond, with leaders and movements beginning to incorporate spiritual values and dimensions into their programs. Discussions now abound about the relevance of introducing religious and ethical issues into government policies and scientific practices.

"I am encouraged by the establishment of a new multifaith institute in Canada called Across Boundaries. I fully support its goal of promoting dialogue and mutual understanding among different religious traditions, and equally important between religious and secular visions of the world. I believe we should take every opportunity to create harmony wherever we can and that Across Boundaries can make a significant contribution in this direction."

– His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Why do I fear my neighbour?

Unfortunately, both these longer-term societal shifts and more recent international events have engendered

"The real issue for faith today is, 'Does affirmation require negation? Can I celebrate my own history, traditions and forms of worship without feeling threatened by the music and intensity of other faith commitments?' I am honoured to be asked to support the sacred and holy endeavours of an organization like Across Boundaries Multifaith Institute. They must bear fruit because the other alternative is total destruction."

– Rabbi David Hartman, Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem

fear and unease among the general population. To these are added the effects of massive demographic changes within industrialized countries over the past several decades. Often called "the global village in one country," Canada is among the world's most ethnically and racially diverse societies. According to Statistics Canada, by 2006 one in six Canadians will

be a member of a visible minority. While pluralistic laws in Canada and elsewhere have gone a long way

to help integrate these many minorities within the general society, a pervasive ignorance about world religious and cultural traditions remains in the West. This ignorance tends to breed fear and mistrust of the other, which in turn undermines genuine attempts at pluralism within society.

A clash of beliefs

As such, our modern Western societies might be characterized as deeply spiritually divided societies in which different positions of belief and unbelief challenge each other's status. And rather than a secular age, it would be more accurate to say we live in an age of fragmented and strongly held beliefs. How do we overcome such destructive and polarizing stereotypes? How do we initiate meaningful dialogue and reconcile our disparate beliefs? How do we allow for our many differences while encouraging mutual understanding and respect?

What can be done?

The March 2004 report of the Canadian government's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade strongly recommends increased education about religions and intercultural and interfaith dialogue: "There's much Canadians do not understand about Islam and Muslims, so public education is vital for promoting harmony, peace, and human rights." In a 2003 document, the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office similarly writes, "Dialogue is an over-used word, but dialogue will be crucial in developing a mature relationship — one which can withstand serious moral or political disagreements." Following suit, the U.S. 9/11 Commission Report published in August 2004 states, "Lives guided by religious faith, including literal beliefs in holy scriptures, are common to every religion, and represent no threat to us. [All] religions have experienced violent internal struggles. With so many diverse adherents, every major religion will spawn violent zealots. Yet understanding and tolerance among people of different faiths can and must prevail."

"It is with great pleasure that I have heard of the establishment of the Across Boundaries Multifaith Institute. Never has the need for an interfaith voice on public issues been more important in Canada and indeed the world. Pope John Paul II's interfaith initiative for peace in calling together faith leaders from around the world at Assisi has underlined the role that religion can and must play in the search for peace, justice and the recognition of human dignity."

—Anne-Marie Savoie, RHSJ, President,
Canadian Religious Conference

How Across Boundaries is making a difference

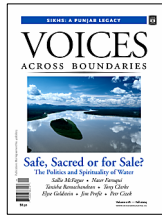
ACROSS BOUNDARIES MULTIFAITH INSTITUTE takes up the challenge issued by these important public voices. Through its grassroots programs, activities and publications, ACROSS BOUNDARIES is making a vital contribution towards educating the general public about religious traditions and practices, and thus helping to strengthen civil society and enhance pluralism in Canada and around the world.

WHAT WE DO

The focus of ACROSS BOUNDARIES MULTIFAITH INSTITUTE ranges from politics and science to culture and the arts, from international development and the economy to ethics and society. Our activities are divided into two broad areas of concern — media/publications and educational programs — both of which are essential to achieving our mission.

Media and Publications

ACROSS BOUNDARIES publishes two timely and seminal magazines and hosts three websites.



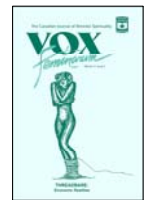
Voices Across Boundaries: A Multifaith Review of Current Affairs

Launched in May 2003, *Voices Across Boundaries* offers what no other general interest magazine does in the English-speaking world. As a genuinely multifaith review of current affairs, it goes beyond the mainstream media to offer readers a thought-provoking mix of cultural, spiritual and secular perspectives, and in-depth reflections on contemporary issues and themes by leading minds, award-winning writers and private citizens. Themes to date include:

- 1:1 "Killing for Our Beliefs" (Summer 2003)
- 1:2 "Designer Babies: The Manipulation of Human Life" (Winter 2003–4)
- 1:3 "Community-To-Go: Shifting Attachments in a High-Speed World" (Summer 2004)
- 2:1 "Safe, Sacred or for Sale? The Politics and Spirituality of Water" (Fall 2004)

Vox Feminarum: The Canadian Journal of Feminist Spirituality

Canada's only multifaith journal devoted to spirituality from a feminist perspective, *Vox Feminarum* was founded in 1996 and explores vital questions through analysis, spiritual autobiography, poetry, fiction, visual arts, and book and media reviews. Published by ACROSS BOUNDARIES since 2002, *Vox* has produced the following issues:



- 2:4 "Ritual Weavings: The Sacred Threads of our Lives" (Fall/Winter 2002)
- 3:1 "Family Heirlooms: Mothers, Daughters and Granddaughters" (Spring/Summer 2003)
- 3:2 "Threadbare: Economic Realities" (Fall/Winter 2003)
- 3:3 "Cross Stitches: The Multi-Faith Challenge" (Spring/Summer 2004)

In 2003–4, *Vox Feminarum* was awarded a grant from the Canada Magazine Fund, Department of Canadian Heritage, for "Multifaith Outreach Initiative," to increase its diversity of content and promote the magazine in more religiously diverse contexts.

www.acrossboundaries.net ♦ www.voicesmagazine.ca ♦ www.voxfeminarum.ca

These three websites help to promote the Institute's activities and publications, and serve as an important information source on multifaith dialogue.

Educational Programs and Activities

No less important to our mandate, the Institute sponsors and cosponsors a variety of courses, lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences and retreats, as well as research and study materials for elementary, secondary and postsecondary curricula. Activities cover a wide spectrum from traditional academic presentations to grassroots and experiential programs. In all cases, they are intended to provide the general public and targeted audiences with tools to help them better understand and function in the multifaith society in which they live.

Activities To Date

Ritual Weavings: An Evening of Celebration

Workshop on creating ritual led by Ginny Freeman MacOwan, Waterloo, Ontario (Oct. 7, 2002)

Is Religion the Problem?

Panel discussion featuring Charles Taylor, Farhang Rajaei, Thupten Jinpa, Rabbi Michel Shekel, Ronald Beiner and moderator Sadia Zaman, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec (May 5, 2003)

An Evening with Molly Wesley

Dramatic presentation by Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, Waterloo, Ontario (May 12, 2003)

Dying, Death and Beyond

Intensive Summer Course, co-sponsored with the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec (July 7–18, 2003)

Diversity in Practice

Ontario Multifaith Council conference, (1) Workshop presentation on ABMI's elementary school pilot project (see below) and (2) Panel discussion about multifaith education resources, Toronto, Ontario (June 27–29, 2004)

Religious Exclusivity and Spiritual Inclusivity

Seminar given by Robert Chodos, Spiritual Heritage Education Network, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario (January 29, 2004)

Feminist Spirituality in a Multifaith Context

Seminar given by Ginny Freeman MacOwan, Spiritual Heritage Education Network, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario (March 25, 2004)

Creation in the Abrahamic Faiths: What is Freedom For?

2004 Annual Furlong Lecture & Symposium, co-sponsored with St. Michael's College, University of Toronto (Oct. 3–4, 2004)

Upcoming Activities**Education and Justice for Immigrant Youth (2005)**

A partnership between ABMI, EthnoCare Canada and the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, this initiative will include: (1) a prevention program, implemented through regional school boards, designed to ensure newcomers are appropriately welcomed, placed and supported throughout their transition into Canadian society and the Canadian education system; and (2) an intervention program to provide education, training and employment opportunities to young adults who have experienced personal and legal difficulties during their time in Canada.

Whole in Body, Whole in Spirit: A Multifaith Retreat on Healing and Health (2005)

This event will offer opportunities for multifaith ritual, exploration of different healing modalities, time for personal reflection, activities and experiential small-group sessions on a number of healing techniques.

Multifaith Education in the Classroom (2005–6 school year)

This pilot project will develop and implement, in collaboration with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and professional theatre groups, a program that uses drama to engage young students (grades 7 & 8) in questions of diversity, inclusivity and multifaith sensitivity.

Restorative Justice Project (2005–6)

In partnership with Correctional Services Canada, the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy, the Ontario Multifaith Council, the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, and the Canadian Council of Churches, the Institute will spearhead a public-awareness campaign to support and enhance existing restorative justice initiatives. Among the many activities in this multi-faceted initiative will be a special issue of *Voices Across Boundaries* devoted to the theme and a series of town-hall forums.

ABMI Multifaith Lecture Series at St. Jerome's University, Waterloo, Ontario (2005–9)

ABMI will cosponsor a five-year annual multifaith lecture as part of the lecture series at St. Jerome's University.

Dilemmas of Difference: Cultural Practices and Human Rights — Conference (2007)

Details to come

WHO WE ARE

ACROSS BOUNDARIES MULTIFAITH INSTITUTE is a Canadian-based educational organization with an international scope. Founded in spring 2001 and incorporated in March 2002, the Institute's members come from a wide diversity of religious and cultural backgrounds to form a truly multifaith community. While hoping to reach some common understanding, participants in the Institute's activities seek neither to blur the boundaries between traditions nor to convert any of these traditions to a single vision. Indeed, the Institute is established with the intention of encouraging dialogue and cooperation across these boundaries — across faith traditions, across cultures, across spaces, across the traditional divide between the religious and secular realms.

Board of Directors

Wanda Romer Taylor, Chair, Secretary
Robert Chodos, Vice-Chair, Treasurer
Louis B. Gascon
Perwaiz Hayat
William Ryan SJ
Thupten Jinpa

Steering Committee

Robert Chodos
Ginny Freeman MacOwan
Wanda Romer Taylor
Gail van Varseveld

Advisory Council

Gregory Baum, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, McGill University
Robert Corman, Founder/president, National Partnership for Social Enterprise consulting firm, Morristown, NJ
Dolly Dastoor, Clinical psychologist; former president, Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America
Parin Dossa, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Simon Fraser University
David Eley SJ, Asst. to the English Canadian Jesuit Provincial for Social and International Ministries
John Fraser, Master, Massey College, University of Toronto
Perwaiz Hayat, Lecturer, Department of Religion, Concordia University
Victor Sogen Hori, Associate Professor of Japanese Religions, McGill University
Rabbi Leigh Lerner, Rabbi, Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, Montreal
Barry Levy, Dean, Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University
Prakash Mody, Jain representative for Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care
Farhang Rajaei, Associate Professor of Political Science and Humanities, Carleton University
Bahija Réghai, Vice-President, Arab Canadian Women's Association (ACWA)
William Ryan SJ, Economist; founding director, Center of Concern, Washington, D.C.
Bernard Shapiro, Ethics Commissioner, House of Commons, Ottawa; Emeritus Principal and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University
David Seljak, Associate Professor, St. Jerome's University, Waterloo, Ontario; Director, St. Jerome's Centre for Catholic Experience
Arvind Sharma, Birks Professor of Comparative Religion, McGill University
Manjit Singh, Instructor on Sikhism, Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University
Charles Taylor, Board of Trustees Professor of Philosophy and Law, Northwestern University
John Thomson, Publisher, Canadian Geographic magazine, Ottawa
Thupten Jinpa, President, Institute of Tibetan Classics
Very Rev Hon Lois Wilson, former Canadian Senator; former moderator, United Church of Canada
Marion Woodman, Jungian analyst in practice in Toronto

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT ACROSS BOUNDARIES MULTIFAITH INSTITUTE

Your tax-deductible donation will help the Institute pursue its important objectives. Please consider sponsoring or contributing to any of the following areas or projects to be undertaken by the Institute over the next three years.

Media and Publications	\$1,200,000 / 3 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Voices Across Boundaries: A Multifaith Review of Current Affairs</i> \$510,000 ◆ <i>Vox Feminarum: A Canadian Journal of Feminist Spirituality</i> \$180,000 ◆ Websites \$240,000 ◆ Conference proceedings \$180,000 ◆ Curriculum materials \$90,000 	
Educational Programs and Events	\$350,000 / 3 years
<p>These include a broad range of activities from conferences to retreats to educational programs in both classroom and community settings (see following for details).</p>	
Development and Infrastructure	\$1,200,000 / 3 years
<p>Excited by what ACROSS BOUNDARIES has to offer, numerous individuals and organizations have approached us to cosponsor and collaborate on a variety of public educational initiatives with a multifaith slant. To develop this area of endeavour, as well as conduct our own programs and events, Across Boundaries needs to invest in paid staff, professional development, office equipment and capacity infrastructure.</p>	

Budget Details (2005)

As a charitable organization, ACROSS BOUNDARIES conducts many programs that are not revenue-generating. In the case of projects for which revenues are anticipated, these have been taken into account in calculating the amount needed.

	<i>Amount Needed</i>
Media and Publications	\$400,000
Periodicals (2005)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Voices Across Boundaries</i> \$170,000 Editorial & production (\$35,000/issue; 3 issues published per year), plus circulation, distribution, marketing, promotion, office facilities and professional development (\$125,000/year), less revenues from subscriptions, single-copy sales & advertising (\$60,000/year) ◆ <i>Vox Feminarum</i> \$60,000 Editorial & production (\$20,000/issue; 2 issues published per year), plus circulation, distribution, marketing, promotion, office facilities and professional development (\$50,000/year), less revenues from subscriptions, single-copy sales & advertising (\$30,000/year) 	

Websites (2005)

- ♦ **www.acrossboundaries.net** \$40,000
Hosting, maintenance, establishing online ordering for ABMI publications, multifaith/interfaith event listings and links, discussion forum
- ♦ **www.voicesmagazine.ca** \$20,000
Hosting, maintenance, expansion of content, current affairs listings and links, discussion forum
- ♦ **www.voxfeminarum.ca** \$20,000
Hosting, complete redesign of the old *Vox* website, addition of content for issues since *Vox* became part of ABMI, maintenance, feminist spirituality listings and links, discussion forum

Conference Proceedings (2005)

- Editorial, layout, design, printing costs for 2 books (200 pages x 750 copies) \$40,000
- Preparation, layout, design costs for 2 CDs (x 750 copies) \$20,000

Curriculum Materials (2005)

- Editorial, layout, design, printing for 1 text book (100 pages x 1,000 copies) \$20,000
- Preparation, layout, design costs for 1 CD (x 1,000 copies) \$10,000

Educational Programs and Events (2005) \$76,000

- ♦ **Education and Justice for Immigrant Youth** \$28,000
Project coordination, administration & promotion, travel & accommodation, post-project materials
- ♦ **Whole in Body, Whole in Spirit: A Multifaith Retreat on Healing and Health** \$14,000
Project coordination, administration & promotion, rental of facilities, materials for activities, honoraria for presenters, meals & refreshments, travel & accommodation (\$20,000), less fees from 40 participants @ \$150 each (\$6,000)
- ♦ **Multifaith Education in the Classroom (2005–6 school year)** \$28,000
Project coordination & administration, post-project materials
- ♦ **ABMI Multifaith Lecture at St. Jerome's University, Waterloo, Ontario** \$6,000
Project coordination & administration, cosponsorship fee

Future events:

- ABMI Multifaith Lecture Series at St. Jerome's University (2006–9): \$24,000
- Dilemmas of Difference: Cultural Practices and Human Rights (2007): \$250,000

Development and Infrastructure (2005) \$400,000

- ♦ **Programs and Partnerships** \$130,000
Staffing and contract fees, office facilities, travel and meeting expenses, professional development
- ♦ **Marketing and Funding Development** \$150,000
Staffing and contract fees, office facilities, promotion materials, travel and meeting expenses, professional development
- ♦ **Business and Administration** \$120,000
Staffing and contract fees, office facilities, professional development, legal and accounting fees

**ACROSS BOUNDARIES has many other projects that require funding.
We would be happy to provide further detail on any and all of our programs.**