



Documenting the service & social justice work of diverse people of faith in the DC area

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INAUGURAL SUMMIT FOR DC AREA'S YOUNG FAITH LEADERS

Washington D.C. - Proving that some leaders in Washington can actually sit together for civil conversation, a group of nearly 100 Millennial representatives from over a dozen local religious communities will meet on Saturday, February 9th, 2013, for the first-ever DC Young Adult Faith Leaders Summit.

Organized by Faith in Action DC in collaboration with the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, the goal of this gathering is to encourage stronger local cooperation between emerging leaders from diverse religious groups, learn more about each other's faith traditions, share successes and challenges mobilizing young people for service and social justice, and build a strong network of supportive allies.

Summit attendees represent Bahá'í, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Latter Day Saints, Muslim, Protestant, Sikh, and Zoroastrian communities. They are clergy and laypersons; work as activists and with faith-based organizations; belong to traditional religious institutions, have multiple affiliations, no affiliations, or are somewhere in-between.

DC Mayor Vincent Gray is scheduled to address the summit and a representative of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships will give the keynote.

The DC Young Adult Faith Leaders Summit will occur during the United Nation's World Interfaith Harmony Week (first week of February) and is a candidate for the World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize, sponsored by the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan. This competition awards a grand prize of \$25,000 to support further interfaith efforts. By holding this summit, the organizers seek to raise up our nation's capital as a national and international model of interfaith cooperation, inspiring the next generation of leaders to work across faith lines.

For additional information, please contact Jack Gordon, Faith in Action DC's producer, at 908.477.7534 or info@faithinactiondc.com. More info is available at www.faithinactiondc.com

Faith leaders promote civility in Washington

Maureen Fiedler, National Catholic Reporter, 17 May 2013

Well, if faith leaders can do it -- actually promote civility in Washington, D.C. -- they will have worked a miracle that rivals those recorded in the Gospels.

Apparently, some are trying. Recently, the nonpartisan Faith and Politics Institute sponsored a two-day conversation among faith groups, "Faith, Politics and Our Better Angels: A Christian Dialogue to Promote Civility."

According to Religion News Service, 25 religious leaders came together with the goal of promoting civil discourse. The meeting included both ends of the political/religious spectrum: Kenda Bartlett, executive director of Concerned Women for America; the Rev. Jeffery Cooper, general secretary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; Barrett Duke of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Sr. Marge Clark of NETWORK , a Catholic social justice lobby; and others.

Also present was Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the U.S. Episcopal church. She told the media, "Faith leaders have a remarkable opportunity to shift the conversation, but it's very challenging, particularly in a larger society that wants to understand everything as a battle, as engaging the enemy, rather than with someone who might have something to teach us." They are reportedly considering the institution of a national day of civil discourse to promote the idea and encourage preaching on the topic.

While I'm glad to see this, much more is needed. Right now, nothing of substance is getting done in Washington. There is also a stubborn inability to come together for the benefit of the American people. I can remember when conservative Ronald Reagan and liberal Tip O'Neill bridged wide gaps to reform Social Security. That day is long gone.

So words are a start. But we need to move beyond civil rhetoric to civil action and legislation.