



Center for Interreligious Understanding
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Scriptural Resources for Peace[©]

Our Scriptures and traditions are the most important spiritual resources which each of us possesses. We believe that the Scriptures of each religion teach the path to peace, but we acknowledge that our various sacred writings have often been and continue to be used to justify violence, war, and exclusion of others. Our various communities cannot ignore such passages which have often been misinterpreted or manipulated for unworthy goals such as power, wealth, or revenge, but we must all recognize the need for new, contextual studies and a deeper understanding of our various Scriptures that clearly enunciate the message and value of peace for all humanity.

Believers need to examine those Scriptural passages that depict people of other religions in ways that conflict with their own self-understanding. This requires a renewed effort to educate properly our own adherents to the values and beliefs of others. Such interreligious education, that takes seriously the self-understanding of other religious traditions, is essential for communicating the message of peace to new generations. This challenge is to remain true to our own faith without disparaging or distorting that of others.

Spiritual resources for peace include not only our Scriptural foundations, but also the example of our fellow believers who, down through history, have taught peace and acted as peacemakers. These include saints, poets and martyrs who have suffered and often given their lives in non-violent commitment to truth, justice and fellowship, which have been the foundations of human progress. They include countless persons of every religion whose names are not recorded by history, but who have valiantly acted to prevent conflict and war, who have assisted victims of violence without regard to religion or nation, and who have worked for justice and reconciliation as the basis for establishing peace. By their actions, they have borne

concrete witness to the mission of each religious community to be agents of peace amidst the harsh realities of injustice, aggression, terrorism and war.

The spiritual resources for peace also include interreligious encounters which have helped many to come together to learn about each other's faith and shared values, and to discover the possibility of living and working together to build societies of justice and peace. Such encounters seek to instill a spirit of mutual respect and genuine understanding of one another and have helped us to see our religions as a force for good. Mutual respect and honoring differences are not simply lofty goals, but achievable reality.

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