

RELIGIOUS SUMMIT DECLARES AUGUST 28TH "DAY OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE"

New York – August 3, 2000 – Organizers of the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders are issuing a call for people around the globe to participate in a Day of Prayer for World Peace by joining the Summit's 1,000 expected religious leaders in prayers for peace, tolerance and understanding. The prayers will occur on the Summit's opening day of Monday, August 28 as the leaders of the world's great faith traditions fill the halls of the United Nations with prayers for peace.

For the first time in history, religious and spiritual leaders of the world's diverse faith traditions will come together in New York to discuss how to forge a partnership of peace with the United Nations. The goal of the Religious Summit is to identify ways that the worldwide religious and spiritual communities can work together as interfaith allies with the United Nations on specific peace, poverty and environmental initiatives.

To support and extend the efforts of these religious leaders who are uniting to further the peace process, the Summit has proclaimed August 28 as the Day of Prayer for World Peace.

"We are asking for people around the world, at any time during the day, to gather in their houses of worship, businesses, streets or homes to join these religious leaders as they enter the United Nations and gather in prayer for peace," said the Summit's Secretary-General Bawa Jain. "One of the themes of the Summit is forgiveness and reconciliation. We are asking individuals around the world to engage in forgiveness and reconciliation within their own lives. This sense of personal peace will in turn help the larger effort for world peace," added Jain.

A portion of the day's events will include Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk who has long been at the forefront of contemplative activism, leading a walking meditation for world peace from 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. EST.

An on-line guided mediation on peace and forgiveness, using excerpts from Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings, will be able on Beliefnet.com. Beliefnet.com is the official web partner of the World Peace Summit.

Walking meditation is an ancient form of Buddhist practice associated with achieving mindfulness, calm and clarity. In the context of the Day of Prayer for World Peace, Summit organizers say the meditation also will symbolize a gentle, contemplative journey toward the goal of world peace.

During the Vietnam War, Thich Nhat Hanh worked tirelessly for reconciliation between North and South Vietnam. His lifelong efforts to foster peace moved Martin Luther King Jr. to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967.

At the Religious Summit, all regions of the world will be represented, as will the major faith traditions of Bahai, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Indigenous, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism.

The Religious Summit convening on August 28, at the United Nations, will bring together recognized religious and spiritual figures to discuss the roles they can play in reducing religious tensions. After meeting at UN headquarters on August 28-29,

these leaders will continue to engage in two-day working group sessions at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to devise special initiatives to address regional conflict, poverty issues and environmental problems. Anticipated outcomes of the Summit are a Declaration for World Peace and plans for the establishment of an ongoing International Advisory Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders that can serve as a resource for the U.N. Secretary-General and the U.N. system in its conflict prevention and resolution efforts. The Summit is being organized by an independent group of interfaith leaders, religious scholars and theologians.

All journalists wishing to cover the portions of the Religious Summit taking place at UN Headquarters must obtain UN Press Credentials. Interested journalists must submit a request to the UN Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit (fax: 212-963-4642) accompanied by a letter of assignment on official letterhead of a media organization and signed by a publisher, assignment editor or bureau chief. The letter should specify the name of the journalist seeking accreditation. The status of the request may be checked by calling 212-963-5934 or 7164. Once approved, a UN grounds pass can be obtained by presenting two forms of photo identification at the Pass and Identification Unit, UNITAR Building, 45th Street and First Avenue, New York, Monday to Friday, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m. and between 2:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. For further information regarding UN accreditation only, call 212-963-6934, 6936 or 6937.

UNTV will be covering the Summit. To obtain b-roll please call UNTV at 212-963-7650. Beliefnet.com is the Summit's official web partner and will be doing a live webcast of the event.