Charter for
Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Different Faiths, Common Action.
Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Draft of Charter Preamble, Purpose and Principles

PREAMBLE

The vision of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the activity of forgiving is vital if healing and reconciliation are to take place, as part of our collective efforts to seek justice, harmony and sustainable peace.

Fostering and practising forgiveness has the power to transform memories and deep-seated responses to legacies of injustice, conflict and war. It can liberate people from being imprisoned in their pasts and long ingrained mental and emotional conditions. Faith and spiritual traditions guide and inspire us to awaken the best of our human potential, by practicing love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation, and to positively reshape our destinies.

Forgiveness is understood as an activity arising directly out of a compassionate consciousness, rooted in the awareness that we all belong to one human family. Compassion is an indispensable spiritual disposition in every faith, religion, dharam or deen, as well as for our everyday human relations. Forgiveness is fostered by our experience of unconditional love and mercy, and an inner calling to live magnanimously and responsibly. It stems from our ability to see a larger context to our individual and collective existence, and from our impulse to lovingly seek and forge genuine and sincere bonds with one another as brothers and sisters.

To see forgiveness as a most profound expression and manifestation of our spiritual and human nature, and a catalyst for inward and outward change, is at the heart of the Charter. To love one’s neighbour as oneself means that the efforts to seek forgiveness for oneself are related to endeavours to forgive and receive forgiveness from the other. Our human journey of forgiveness and reconciliation can only be navigated freely and voluntarily. Sharing forgiveness can therefore only be inspired, not demanded.

Existing, inspirational examples of forgiveness compel us to practical and effective actions, leading to reconciliation, conflict resolution and peace building. Forgiveness and reconciliation are an indispensable part of our journey to peace, in our interconnected and interdependent world and our quest for restorative justice.

Throughout history, acts of forgiveness have helped to de-escalate national and international conflicts, and to restore and sustain harmonious relationships in the daily lives of individuals, families, communities and societies. Insights from the lives of outstanding individuals and inspiring grassroots movements, combined with learning from a shared global heritage of sacred teachings, provide guidance to take forward the Charter’s work.

By offering paradigms of forgiveness, the Charter directs commitment and activities towards a growing practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, both in public processes and in private settings, in order to foster healing, harmony and peace in a wounded and fractured world.
PURPOSE
We, people, mindful of our shared humanity, commit to practice and nurture forgiveness and reconciliation, to foster healing, harmony, justice and sustainable peace in our world.

PRINCIPLES
1. The Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is the founding document of a worldwide movement of people, seeking forgiveness, reconciliation, justice and sustainable peace, being aware of the oneness of our human family.
2. We seek reconciliation, forgiveness and peace amongst individuals, families, communities, public institutions, states and religious traditions.
3. We believe forgiveness and reconciliation are needed for peace to be sustainable, and to end cycles of violence.
4. We co-create reconciliation and peace, by seeking and receiving forgiveness. Forgiveness is the first step towards a deeper reconciliation.
5. We believe to be forgiving and to let go of past burdens is in the hand of each of us.
6. We believe that forgiveness cannot be demanded from others, can only be freely offered and is for the benefit, freedom and inner peace of the one who forgives.
7. We believe forgiveness finds completion in becoming unconditional.
8. We aim to express compassion, mercy, kindness and love in all our interactions with others.
9. We believe that peace is more than the absence of violence, and that it includes inner peacefulness as well as peacefulness with others and with the environment.
10. We join hands and reach out to others to free ourselves of destructive pasts, to heal personal wounds, to overcome conflicts and wars, in order to create a better future for all.
11. We draw upon the wisdom of the world’s traditions, which include religious, spiritual, indigenous, and philosophical world-views, as well as on our intuitive sense of compassion.
12. We seek cooperation with all interested and like-minded people, organisations, public institutions and the UN System, bearing in mind the interdependence and unity of humanity.
13. We affirm the equal rights and responsibilities of all women and men, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities.
14. We practise open inclusiveness of all, regardless of gender, traditions, affiliations and ethnicity.
15. We are committed to non-violence and restorative justice, always seeking peaceful resolutions to conflicts and wars, even if self-defence may be necessary in some circumstances.
16. We support all efforts and initiatives of healing, reconciliation and peace-building, and encourage inter-cultural, inter-religious, and inter-ethnic dialogue, understanding and cooperation.
17. We seek to foster harmony within our Earth community and unity amongst our human family, valuing the interconnectedness of all life.
18. We welcome as members and supporters all individuals, organisations and institutions who subscribe to the Preamble, Purpose, and Principles. We will seek affiliation with institutions and networks that support the Vision, Purpose, Aims and Objectives of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation.
Bhai Sahib took early retirement in 1989 after working for 27 years as a civil structural engineer and housing expert in East and Central Africa, to devote the rest of his life to selflessly serving humanity. Since 1995 he is responsible for the day to day running of probably the biggest Sikh place of worship in Europe where he spends on average some 12 hours a day. In 2010 he was made a Papal Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great in recognition of his dedicated work for Roman-Catholic Sikh relations and for his enthusiastic commitment to working for peace among people of all faiths. In 2015 he was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his outstanding and tireless work over forty years to promote peace and coexistence by bringing people of different faiths together to contribute to the common good of humanity. He is a member of its World Council which consists of 60 senior religious leaders from all continents. He advises US President Barack Obama through his service on the Multi-religious Cooperation and International Affairs Task Force of the White House Faith-Based Council. He was appointed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and re-appointed by Secretary Kerry as one of ten members of the US State Department’s Advisory Committee on Strategic Partnership with Civil Society and he is a Co-chair of the State Department’s Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group. Dr Vendley is a recipient of the UNICEF Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr William F. Vendley is the Secretary General of Religions for Peace, the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action for peace by working to advance multi-religious consensus on positive aspects of peace as well as concrete actions to stop war, help eliminate extreme poverty and protect the earth. He is a member of its World Council which consists of 60 senior religious leaders from all continents. He coordinates the activities and projects of Religions for Peace’s 92 national and 5 regional councils. Dr. Vendley is a pioneer in advancing multi-religious cooperation to help resolve conflict and has been engaged in multi-religious peacemaking efforts in Syria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and other countries. Dr Vendley is an advisor to a number of governments on matters related to religion and peace. He advised US President Barack Obama through his service on the Multi-religious Cooperation and International Affairs Task Force of the White House Faith-Based Council. He was appointed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and re-appointed by Secretary Kerry as one of ten members of the US State Department’s Advisory Committee on Strategic Partnership with Civil Society and he is a Co-chair of the State Department’s Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group. Dr Vendley is a recipient of the UNICEF Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr Josef Boehle

Dr Josef Boehle is a Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham, UK. He received a postgraduate degree in Theology from the University of Tubingen, Germany and received his PhD from the University of Birmingham in 2001 for his thesis on inter-religious Co-operation in a Global Age.

He has worked for international interreligious organizations and helped to organise major conferences and summits addressing interreligious, intercultural and intercivilisational issues. From 2005-2010 he was a member of a UK Government (DFID) sponsored Research Consortium on ‘Religions and Development’. Dr Boehle previously participated in a 4 year process of developing the United Religions Initiative Charter (1996-2000). He was the European Coordinator of the URI from 1997-2000. The URI Charter has been distributed and is actively consulted in many countries around the world.

Dr Boehle was also a coordinator of the development of the Concept Note of the Interactive Hearing with Civil Society of the 2007 High-level Dialogue of the UN General Assembly on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace. His work and teaching focuses now on Religion, Politics and Peacebuilding.

Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Rabbi David Rosen CBE

Co-chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, is the International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Director of its Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding. He is a past chairman of IFJIC, the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the broad-based coalition of Jewish organizations representing World Jewry to other religions. Rabbi Rosen is Honorary Advisor on Interfaith Relations to the Chief Rabbi of Israel; serves on its Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, and represents the Chief Rabbi on the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land.

He is an International Co-President of Religions for Peace and serves on its Executive Committee; a founding member of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCI); and a member of the Elijah Institute’s World Board of Religious Leaders. He is a founder of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel that embraces some seventy organizations in Israel involved in interfaith relations (ICCI).

He is an International Co-President of Religions for Peace and serves on its Executive Committee; a founding member of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCI); and a member of the Elijah Institute’s World Board of Religious Leaders. He is a founder of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel that embraces some seventy organizations in Israel involved in interfaith relations (ICCI).

In November 2005 he was made a papal Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great for his contribution topromoting Catholic-Jewish interfaith relations (ICCI).

Rey Kosho Niwano

Co-chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Rey Kosho Niwano is President-designate of Rissho Kosei-kai and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace. She serves on the Executive Committee of Religions for Peace.

President-designate Kosho Niwano was born in Tokyo as the first daughter of President Nichiko Niwano. After receiving a law degree from Gakushuin University, she studied at Rissho Kosei-kai’s Gakurin seminary. She is currently devoted to studying the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and shares the teachings with members who visit the Great Sacred Hall for worship services and special events.

She also actively promotes interreligious cooperation domestically and internationally in her capacity as president-designate of Rissho Kosei-kai and attends interfaith congresses.

She is a councillor of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan), a board of director of Religions for Peace Japan, co-moderator of Religions for Peace International and a member of the board of directors of KAICIID (The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue).

Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah

Co-chair, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah is President, Forum for Peace in Muslim Societies, Abu Dhabi, and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace. He serves on the Executive Committee of Religions for Peace. As a life-long advocate for peace, Shaykh Bin Bayyah is the President of the Forum of Peace in Muslim Societies and one of today’s most well respected Islamic scholars.

He was born in 1935 in eastern Mauritania. He studied sacred sciences in the Mauritanian centers of learning known as Mahadhir. He then studied law at the Faculty of Law in Tunisia and was trained in Tunisian courts in 1961. Bin Bayyah has served in many distinguished positions over the years, including but not limited to Judge at the High Court of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the first Minister for Islamic Affairs and Education, Minister of Justice and Official Holder of the Seal. He is currently the Chairman of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, Member of the European Research & Fawsa Council, Member of the Muslim League’s International High Council of Mosques and lecturer at the King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia.

Shaykh Bin Bayyah has published numerous writings and has been distinguished in a variety of ways for his work in Islam, interreligious dialogue and peace building. He was named one of the most Influential Muslims from 2009–2013. Shaykh Bin Bayyah has received numerous awards for his work as an Islamic scholar and advocate for peace.

We have established an Editorial Panel to oversee the drafting and writing of the Charter text. Religious leaders, academics and leaders of International NGOs have agreed to join the Editorial Panel to ensure that the Charter text will have the envisioned high quality and global appeal - that the Charter text will be an aesthetic expression of the values inherent in the sacred teachings of the major World Religions.

**Editorial Panel Members:**

**Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh**, Co-convenor, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Biography is on page 5 of the brochure.

**Dr William F. Vendley**, Co-convenor, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Biography is on page 5 of the brochure.

**Dr Joseph Bochelle, Director, Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation and Editorial Panel Director** - Biography is on page 5 of the brochure.

...continued overleaf (page 8-11)
Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Diasporas and Reconciliation Studies.

2008, Professor Ahluwalia was appointed a UNESCO Chair in Transnational journals: Social Identities; African Identities; and Sikh Formations. In October post-colonial Theory: African Inflections; post-colonialism and the Politics terms of volume and prestige. He is the sole author of four books: Politics and internationally renowned for breaking down disciplinary boundaries and exile, migration, and the complexities of identity formation. His work is His main research interests lie in the areas of African studies, social and post-colonial theory, and the politics of diaspora, exile, migration, and the complexities of identity formation. His work is internationally renowned for breaking down disciplinary boundaries and exile, migration, and the complexities of identity formation. His work is internationally renowned for breaking down disciplinary boundaries and exile, migration, and the complexities of identity formation. 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International Advisory Council for the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, and a
advisor to the Pluralism Project (Harvard University), a member of the
Center for the Study of Religion and Society, Victoria University, Canada, and
for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican and an educator on interfaith issues.
He is also a regular participant in the consultations of the Pontifical Council
Canada, Canberra, Australia, Harare, Zimbabwe and Puerto Alegre, Brazil.
He has been active in interfaith dialogues and cooperations, as he initiated the
Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

**Professor Anantanand Rambachan**

Professor Anantanand Rambachan is Professor of Religion, Philosophy and Asian Studies at
Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, USA, where he has been teaching since 1985. Prof Rambachan has been involved in the field of
interreligious relations and dialogue for over twenty-five years, as a Hindu
participant and analyst. He has contributed to numerous consultations and
discussions convened by national and international organizations concerned
with interreligious issues. He is very active in the dialogue programs of
the World Council of Churches, and was a Hindu guest and participant in the
discussions convened by national and international organizations concerned
with interreligious issues. He has contributed to numerous consultations and
has been teaching since 1985. Prof Rambachan has been involved in the field
of education on interfaith issues.

**Rabbi David Rosen**

International Director of Interreligious Affairs, AJC, Israel.

**H.E. Dr. Imam Syamsuddin**

Leader, Muhammadiyah; Moderator of Asian Conference of Religions for Peace;
Chairman, Centre for Dialogue and Cooperation among Civilizations, Indonesia

**Maria Voce**

President of the Focolare Movement for a second consecutive term in September 2014.

Maria Voce was born in Ajello, Calabria, Italy, on 16 July 1937, the first of seven children. Her father was a
doctor; her mother a housewife. During her last year of law school in Rome (1959)
she met a group of focolarini at the university and was fascinated by their Gospel
witness. Upon completion of her studies, she became the first woman lawyer in the
city's court system. Later she studied Theology and Canon Law. In 1963, she felt the unexpected and
overwhelming “call” of God to follow in the way of Chiara Lubich and
she immediately responded. From 1964 to 1972 she was in Sicily, in the Focolare
Centres of Syracuse and Catania. From 1972 to 1978 she belonged to Chiara Lubich's
personal secretariat and for the following 13 years she lived in the Focolare
Centre of Istanbul where she established ecclesial and interreligious relationships,
with the then Patriarch of Constantinople, Dometius I, and
with numerous metropolitan bishops including the now Patriarch Bartholomew I, as well as with representatives of various Churches. As a law expert, from 1995 she was a member of the
Albo School, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies chaired by Chiara
Lubich. From 2000 she was also responsible for the international commission,
“Communion and Law,” a network of academics and professionals involved in law.
From 2002 until their approval, which came in 2007, she worked directly with Chiara Lubich in updating the General Statutes of the Movement. On 7 July 2008 by the General Assembly
of March of the same year. She was born in Ajello

**Professor Garrett Thomson, CEO, Guerrand-Hermes**

Foundation for Peace, UK and USA

Professor Garrett Thomson is the Guerrand-Hermes Foundation for Peace CEO as
well as Director of Research. He received his
DPhil from Oxford University. Currently he is
Compton Professor of Philosophy at the College of Wooster, USA. He was
formerly the CEO of the World Subud Association in 2005-2010. Garrett is the
author of numerous books including Nucle, Kant, Introduction to Modern
Philosophy; and a series of introductory texts on Descartes, Locke, Aristotle,
Kant, and Leibniz. He co-edited the six-volume The Longest Standard
History of Philosophy. His other recent works include Una Introduzione a la
Practica de la Filosofia, On Philosophy and On the Meaning of Life. Most
recently, Garrett has co-authored books as part of the GHFP’s research team.

**Garrett Thomson**

Professor Garrett Thomson, CEO, Guerrand-Hermes
Foundation for Peace, UK and USA

**Maria Voce, President, Focolare Movement, Italy**

Maria Voce was elected president of the Focolare Movement on 7 July 2008 by the General Assembly
of the Focolare. She is the first focolarina to succeed the founder, Chiara Lubich, who died on the 14th
of March of the same year. She was born in Ajello, Calabria, Italy, on 16 July 1937, the first of seven children. Her father was a
doctor; her mother a housewife. During her last year of law school in Rome (1959)
she met a group of focolarini at the university and was fascinated by their Gospel
witness. Upon completion of her studies, she became the first woman lawyer in the
city's court system. Later she studied Theology and Canon Law. In 1963, she felt the unexpected and
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“Communion and Law,” a network of academics and professionals involved in law.
From 2002 until their approval, which came in 2007, she worked directly with Chiara Lubich in updating the General Statutes of the Movement. On 24 November 2009
Herzog appointed her as a member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.
Maria Voce was re-elected as President of the Focolare Movement for a second
consecutive term in September 2014.
1. Formation of editorial panel
An international editorial panel will be established to oversee and direct the writing of the Charter. 

2. Setting up of advisory council
As soon as feasible, an advisory council will be established and convened to include different sectors: religious leaders, scholars and NGO leaders, amongst others.

3. Research component of the project
Research into similar charters, initiatives and best practices will inform the development of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation text and activities associated with the Charter.

4. Project development phase
- to establish an editorial panel to direct the Charter drafting process
- to consult and develop a draft of the Charter text
- to seek collaboration with like-minded organisations and communities
- to hold a Symposium in April 2014 and develop a network of partner organisations and launching of the Charter internationally.

5. Project implementation phase
The project implementation phase will include collecting feedback from the consultation process, holding a second Symposium/Consultation, finalising the Charter text, developing joint activities, advancing research projects with partner organisations and launching the Charter internationally.

6. Engagement with governments and global institutions
We will seek engagement with governments and global institutions during the final part of the Charter drafting process (once the Charter text is being finalised and a sufficient network of partner organisations has been established), to inform public policies and strategies, nationally and internationally, in order to make a significant contribution to overcoming and healing the legacies of conflicts and wars. We propose the establishment of a World Day of Harmony Week.

This Statement of Vision and Purpose can form the basis for a Preamble of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

The two opening paragraphs of the Statement of Vision and Purpose:

"The vision of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the activity of forgiving is vital if healing and reconciliation is to take place, as part of our collective efforts to end retributive justice and sustainable peace.

Fostering and practicing forgiveness has the power to transform deep-seated responses to memory and legacies of injustice, conflict and war. It can liberate people from being imprisoned in their pasts and long ingrained mental and emotional conditions created by such legacies. Faith and spiritual traditions have long guided us and inspired us to awaken the best of our human potential, to practice love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation, and to reshape our destinies."

Executive Summary

[October 2016]

- In 2011, the question of developing a Charter for Forgiveness was first raised by Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh, Chairman, Gurus Nanak Nikaham Sankh Jatha. In a series of conversations between Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh and Dr Josef Bohle (University of Birmingham) the initial idea, vision, concept and project proposal for a Charter for Forgiveness was developed.
- After gaining the support of the Fetzer Institute (USA) for the initial project development phase in 2012, additional organisations were approached to seek their support, most prominently the Gunta-Handes Foundation for Peace (UK) and Religions for Peace International.
- In the early Charter development phase, Forgiveness and Reconciliation were identified as being closely related values and both being necessary to achieve sustainable peace between individuals and communities. Dr William Vendley, Secretary-General of Religions for Peace International, enthusiastically embraced the Charter idea, vision and project, and joined Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh as co-convenor of the Charter project.
- Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh and Dr William Vendley as co-convenors, and Dr Josef Bohle as Director, have since formed the core leadership team.
- A very successful International Symposium on Forgiveness and Reconciliation was held in Birmingham in April 2014, bringing together 30 international experts, leaders and activists.
- A Statement of Vision and Purpose was developed by a working team and aided by contributions from the participants in the 2014 Symposium. This Statement summarises succinctly the core aims, principles, values and objectives of the proposal Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation.
- This Statement of Vision and Purpose can form the basis for a Preamble of the Charter.

Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Communication and Outreach
Among the planned activities for outreach and communication:

• Consulting with participating organisations and individuals concerning a draft text of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation
• Sharing and publicising the Charter text
• Highlighting the unique focus and tangible outcomes of adopting the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation
• Encouraging seminars and conferences
• Inviting religious communities to engage with the Charter
• Collaborating with similar initiatives/organisations
• Encouraging acts of commitments to the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation by individuals and organisations
• Establishing an annual award for outstanding examples of Forgiveness and Reconciliation
• Publicising and distributing the Charter text through a variety of web based media

Outcomes and Intended Audiences of the Charter Project

The initial targets and outcomes to be achieved have been described above under the Project Development Phase. The Project Implementation Phase will finalise the draft Charter text, develop joint activities (including further research projects) with partner organisations and launch the Charter internationally. We propose the establishment of a World Day of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, to be held annually during World Interfaith Harmony Week.

The advisory council, as well as the international consultation process devised to draft the Charter text, will help to increase understanding amongst the participating organisations and beyond, about the awareness, motivations and conditions for a ‘Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation’.

The research and consultation process will identify many individuals and communities for whom the act of forgiving and being forgiven has had a healing and restorative effect, as well as those who are currently in, or are emerging from, conflict situations. The lack or absence of forgiveness and reconciliation affects people at all levels, from personal, marital and domestic realms to local, national and international arenas. Thus the primary audiences will span:

• Ordinary individuals in the context of home, family, neighbourhood and workplace and associated organisations which support, guide and govern life in these domains.
• Schools/universities/education institutions and religious/spiritual communities, which help to shape the values by which people live.
• Local, national and international guiding institutions.
• Media institutions which influence mindsets, habits, opinions and inclinations.

There are many ways to communicate the work on, and the results of, the Charter. During the chartering process a wide range of individuals and organisations will be consulted and asked to distribute through their networks the draft charter text. A website and a range of multimedia resources will be developed. It is intended to work closely with partner organisations to reach out through media networks to a global audience.

Once the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation has been successfully launched there will be the further need to communicate with participating organisations, and to organise joint activities. It will also create the possibility for further research projects (case studies) around aspects of forgiveness (e.g. forgiveness and political reconciliation processes, peacebuilding and conflict resolution; forgiveness and community relations, human well-being; forgiveness and education; forgiveness and economics).

The proposed Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation also has a link to the proposed Museum of the World Religions (UK) project in Birmingham and the value-centred Religious Education work of Dr Marius Felderhof (the Director of the Museum project) at the University of Birmingham.
Our Mission
To foster awareness of the power of love and forgiveness in the emerging global community.

People across the globe, from all cultures and traditions, embrace love and forgiveness in daily life. These values are universally viewed as central to the fabric of humanity. Yet, the emerging global community has few institutions dedicated to deepening the understanding and fostering deeper awareness of these values. In this context, the Fetzer Institute pursues a unique role—working to investigate, activate, and celebrate the power of love and forgiveness as a practical force for good in today's world. We are interested in how people truly experience and understand love and forgiveness from their diverse points of view, especially from the perspective of their daily work in the world.

Mission & Objectives
Our mission is to promote and support peace, and a sustainable human future. We seek to contribute strategically to the resolution of human problems, in a spirit of optimism and realism. Our objective is to facilitate processes that help true human qualities to develop in the world, and for our work to be inspired by these qualities.

The GHFP actively
• Conducts research and seeks knowledge which can help to change perceptions and promote transformation.
• Initiates, supports and facilitates projects and processes that help bring people towards understanding, compassion and growth.
• Creates quiet, safe and open meeting and dialogic spaces where relevant questions can be posed in an environment which can be conducive to understanding.
It is forbidden for a person to be cruel and not grant pardon. One should rather easily forgive and not easily grow angry, and when the offender requests forgiveness he should forgive with a full heart and generous spirit. Even if he caused him distress and committed many offenses against him, he shall not exact revenge or bear a grudge. This is the way of the Israelite people and their principled heart. [Hilkhot Teshuva 2:10, Maimonides]

‘Where there are lies and deceit - there is sin; Where there is greed - there is famine, death and destruction; Where there is forgiveness - there is God himself’

Bhagat Kabir Ji

[Sacred Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, ang.1372]

‘But if you pardon and exonerate and forgive, Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful’

[Qur’an, 64: 14]

‘God, You are always forgiving, and always merciful’

Fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji

[Sacred Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, ang.713]

‘And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.’

[Mark, 11:25, New Testament]

Addressing Dhritarashtra, Vishura said: ‘There is one only defect in forgiving persons, and not another; that defect is that people take a forgiving person to be weak. That defect, however, should not be taken into consideration, for forgiveness is a great power. Forgiveness is a virtue of the weak, and an ornament of the strong. Forgiveness subdues (all) in this world; what is there that forgiveness cannot achieve? What can a wicked person do unto him who carries the sabre of forgiveness in his hand? Fire falling on the grassless ground is extinguished of itself. And unforgiving individual defiles himself with many enormities. Righteousness is the one highest good, and forgiveness is the one supreme peace; knowledge is one supreme contentment; and benevolence, one sole happiness.’

[From the Mahabharata, Uttar Pradesh Section — Hindu Dharam]
Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation (21 - 22)

Peace Forum on Forgiveness and Reconciliation

World Interfaith Harmony Week 2017

“The Power of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in our Contemporary World”

At the Nishkam Centre, Birmingham UK

4 February 2017
Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Statement of Vision and Purpose

The vision of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the activity of forgiving is vital if healing and reconciliation is to take place, as part of our collective efforts to seek restorative justice and sustainable peace.

Fostering and practicing forgiveness has the power to transform deep-seated responses to memories and legacies of injustice, conflict and war. It can liberate people from being imprisoned in their pasts and long ingrained mental and emotional conditions created by such legacies. Faith and spiritual traditions have long guided us and inspired us to awaken the best of our human potential, to practice love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation, and to reshape our destinies.

(From the Statement of Vision and Purpose, first two paragraphs)