



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

A representative body of Sikh institutions of America founded under the patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Member Gurdwaras:

1. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
2. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
3. Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
4. Sikh Gurdwara Riverside, Riverside, CA
5. Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver, CO
6. Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
7. Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
8. Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
9. Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
10. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
11. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
12. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
13. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
14. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
15. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
16. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
17. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
18. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
19. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
20. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
21. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
22. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
23. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
24. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
25. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
26. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
27. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
28. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
29. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
30. Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield, WI

Other Sikh Institution Members:

1. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Found., Anaheim, CA
2. Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
3. Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
4. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
5. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
6. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

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WSC-AR Participates in National Interfaith Prayer Service Honoring Dr. King's Legacy of "Building the Beloved Community" at Riverside Church in New York

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) represented the Sikh faith at a National Interfaith Prayer Service held on the evening of April 4, 2005 at Riverside Church in New York. The service was titled "Beyond Iraq: Building the Beloved Community."

The prayer service was organized to observe the 37th death anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his historic speech at Riverside Church 38 years ago on the Vietnam War. Dr. King had delivered a speech "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" at this church on April 4, 1967.

During the worship service, the church sanctuary was packed with about 2,000 persons of many faiths.

Drs. Gurcharan Singh and Tarunjit Singh, Members of the WSC-AR's Regional Committee, participated in the interfaith worship service. Dr. Gurcharan Singh shared a Sikh prayer for peace along with Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian prayers by other participants. Dr. Tarunjit Singh participated in the formal procession into the church sanctuary carrying a banner of WSC-AR.

The worship service was led by Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Pastor of Riverside Church. He is known to be one of the top Christian preachers in America and is a giant among the progressive Christian community of the US.

Following the Sikh prayer for peace, Ms. Celeste Zappalla and Ms. Cindy Sheehan, of Gold Start Families for Peace (a group of parents of soldiers killed in Iraq) shared their grief with the worshippers. Cindy Sheehan's son, SPC Casey Austin Sheehan, had been killed in Iraq exactly a year ago. Ms. Sheehan's emotional call for peace and sharing of the memories of her son brought tears to nearly the entire congregation.

Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, author and well-known advocate for Justice and Peace, highlighted Dr. King's commitment to peace and justice for all, and delivered a resounding sermon highlighting the "ugly truths and beautiful lies" with regard to the war in Iraq.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow (of Shalom Center in Philadelphia), Imam Feisal Rauf (of Masjid al Farah Tribebbca, NY), Rev. Dr. William Sinkford (President, Unitarian Universalist Association), and Honorable Jane L. Campbell (Mayor of Cleveland) expressed the hopes and desires of Dr. King to build the "beloved community."

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Founder and President of the Rainbow Push Coalition, presented a sermon in which he called upon the nation to break the silence on the war on Iraq and follow in the steps of Dr. King.

Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock, Founding Co-Director of Faith Voices for the Common Good, shared a consensus document titled "Peace Not Poverty" developed by about 13,000 persons of faith and conscience who participated in an internet write-in March 30 – April 2.

At the end of the worship service, a national bus tour "Break the Silence – Building the Beloved Community" left from the steps of the church for 27 cities across the nation, including Washington and Philadelphia. Mr. Kavneet Singh, a member of the WSC-AR's Regional Committee, joined with other area Sikhs in welcoming the bus tour stop at Project Home in Philadelphia on the morning of April 5.

The interfaith prayer service was organized by a large and diverse coalition of over 50 religious and peace groups including the Clergy and Laity Network, National Council of Churches in the USA, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Baptist Peace Fellowship, Buddhist Peace Fellowship, World Sikh Council – America Region, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Gold Star Families for Peace, Jewish Voice for Peace, Pax Christi USA, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, Sojourners, and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

A 9-minute edited clip of the Beyond Iraq Riverside event is available for download at <http://www.drivedemocracy.org/breakthesilence/>

The WSC-AR is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 36 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and other Sikh institutions across the nation.

[The following photo in jpeg format, suitable for publication, can be obtained by e-mailing <contact@worldsikhcouncil.org>:](mailto:contact@worldsikhcouncil.org)



Caption: Dr. Gurcharan Singh, Member of Regional Committee of World Sikh Council – America Region, joins with Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian leaders in prayer at "Beyond Iraq: Building the Beloved Community" interfaith prayer service at Riverside Church in New York on April 4, 2005 (Photo courtesy of Virginia Wilber)