



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

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

P.O. Box 3635, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA

Phone: 614-210-0591

E-mail: contact@worldsikhcouncil.org, Website: www.worldsikhcouncil.org

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 Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
18. Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh, Las Vegas, NV
19. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
20. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
21. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
22. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
23. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
24. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
25. Sikh Sadh Sangat, Easton, PA
26. Philadelphia Sikh Society, Millbourne, PA
27. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
28. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
29. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
30. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
31. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
32. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
33. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
34. 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

Contact: Manmohan Singh, Secretary General
972-684-4638, contact@worldsikhcouncil.org

First US Catholic-Sikh National Consultation Held

(Photos suitable for publication are available upon request from interfaith@worldsikhcouncil.org.)

Representatives of the World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) met on Saturday, May 20, 2006 in New York City for a landmark all-day Catholic-Sikh bilateral national interreligious consultation.

The day-long meeting was hosted by Religions for Peace – USA at the Church Center at the United Nations. The objective of the meeting was for the Catholic and Sikh communities in the US to meet formally for the first time and explore issues of common interest.

The Catholic delegation was headed Rev. James Massa, Executive Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, with Monsignor Felix Machado, Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican in Rome, as a special guest and advisor. The Sikh delegation was led by Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of the WSC-AR with assistance from Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of Interfaith Committee of WSC-AR. A total of 12 invited representatives from the USCCB and WSC-AR attended and participated in the discussions. Two observers of Religions for Peace – USA also attended the consultation.

Monsignor Felix Machado in his opening comments remarked that “the Catholic Church at the highest level appreciates this dialogue with the Sikh community... Sikhs respect us, not suspect us.”

In his opening remarks, Dr. Manohar Singh said, “The universal message of Sikhi respects pluralism and we welcome our Catholic friends with open arms. This dialogue is an opportunity for our communities to begin a conversation at the highest level on how we may be able to work with each other in trust and friendship to make this world a more peaceful and just place for all.”

At the consultation, the Sikh and Catholic communities expressed shared concerns over the challenges faced by immigrant communities in the US, the curtailment of religious freedom and human rights in South Asia, and the challenges of secularism to both religious communities.

While the Sikh and Catholic communities in the US had interacted in multifaith settings, this gathering was the first of its kind in which the two communities met in a bilateral manner. The participants committed themselves to meeting again in 2006 with a focus on “Divinity, Humanity, and Creation”, and to continue to meet at least once a year through a working committee.

At the end of the meeting at the Church Center of the United Nations, the Catholic and Sikh participants visited the Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara Sahib in Glen Cove, NY and participated in the evening worship service at the Gurdwara Sahib. The consultation ended with langar (Sikh community meal) served by Sikh volunteers.

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) is an assembly of the Catholic Church hierarchy which works together to unify, coordinate, promote, and carry on Catholic activities in the United States; to organize and conduct religious, charitable, and social welfare work at home and abroad; to aid in education; and to care for immigrants. The bishops themselves constitute the membership of the Conference and are served by a staff of over 350 lay people, priests, deacons, and religious.

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 40 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and other Sikh institutions across the nation. WSC-AR works to promote Sikh interests at the national and international level focusing on issues of advocacy, education, and well-being of humankind.

The following photos in jpeg format, suitable for publication, can be obtained by e-mailing <interfaith@worldsikhcouncil.org>:



Photo 1 Caption: Monsignor Felix Machado, Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican, and Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of the WSC-AR at the Consultation (*Photo courtesy of WSC-AR*)



Photo 2 Caption: Sikh and Catholic participants meet at Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara in Glen Cove, NY (*Photo courtesy of WSC-AR*)



Photo 3 Caption: Dr. Anahat Kaur, Chairperson of WSC-AR's Education Committee and Rev. James Massa, Executive Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, share a conversation (*Photo courtesy of WSC-AR*)



Photo 4 Caption: Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR, and Rev. Bud Heckman, Executive Director of Religions for Peace – USA at the meeting (*Photo courtesy of WSC-AR*)



Photo 5 Caption: Mr. Anhad Singh (center), youth from Palatine Gurdwara in Chicago, shares his thoughts as Rev. Canon Francis V. Tiso, Associate Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, and Rev. Donald Rooney, Ecumenical Officer of the Diocese of Arlington, VA, listen and reflect. (*Photo courtesy of WSC-AR*)