Pathways to Peace:
A Spiritual Journey
Into a World
Beyond Religious Conflict

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Overview:
The Historical Context

If we are to understand the world we live in, and provide a possible paradigm for dialogue and tolerance in the 21st century, we must understand and be able to speak to the religious traditions which impact so many of our world events.
Proposed Objectives:

• To research the causes of religious conflict and discover paradigms for building peace.

• To create strategies that might be employed to bring religious tolerance and understanding in the midst of our diversity.

• To bring new awareness and understanding to our own religiously diverse community at Lynn University.
Program Plan:

• To spend six months (January – July 2017) in the key religious epicenters of our world (including the Far East, the Middle East, Eastern/Western Europe, and India).

• In order to research the question of what are the causes of religious conflict in our world and discover new paradigms for building peace.
The Logistics:

A Journey of Transformation

- Nearly 100K by plane, train, boat, bus, car, tuk-tuk, rickshaw, bicycle, camel, elephant and walking.

- Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Druze, and Baha’i
Who are you?
Then came India...
Video Vignette
The Common Core: People

People are, in essence, the same the world over -- even in their spectacularly unique expressions of life.
Religion, at its core, is a universal expression of our human desire for meaning, purpose, and hope -- even in its diverse array of imagining the world and beyond.
The Causes of Conflict:

When we are violent in small areas (food preparation, treatment of animals) we can easily become violent in larger areas (people – human interaction).
The Causes of Conflict:

• We tend to define ourselves as-over-against what we are not (i.e. different from our neighbors/other religions) rather than what we are and what we might share with those who are different from us.

• This DUALISM inevitably leads to violence.
The Causes of Conflict:

1. Practicing religion as a competitive enterprise

2. The coopting of religion by those with a dark agenda (fundamentalists/terrorists) Religion used to instill fear and control (history is rife with examples)

3. Exclusivity over Inclusivity

4. Particularity over Universality

5. Tribal at the expense of what is Global
The Causes of Conflict:

When the Tribal feels threatened by the Global.

- Loss of individual identity
- Subsumed by the greater good
- Particular overpowered by the universal
Pathways to Peace:

The “3 Selves” necessary for a healthy religion (otherwise it borders on being a cult and open to abusive practices):

- Self-Aware
- Self-Critiquing
- Self-Reforming
Pathways to Peace:

Food breaks down walls when shared and creates relationships when paired with dialogue.
Pathways to Peace:

If we dared to eat together, sleep together, live life together – as this requires trust and breaks-down walls of suspicion – then we would have peace.
Pathways to Peace:

• If we dared to Dialogue with an open mind; not in order to decide if someone is right or wrong, but to understand them (with respect and empathy)!

• We all have something in common with one another – our common humanity!
Pathways to Peace:

Dare to Pray together!

• We will have peace when we start to see each other not as "other" but as "brother."
• Example of Blue Mosque
Pathways to Peace:

• Pathways to Peace begins with a journey of inner peace.

• We cannot hope to achieve a global peace if we do not first achieve peace with ourselves (our inner self).

• We are more alike than unalike.
Pathways to Peace:

The Sacred in the Profane, the pathway to peace in the stuff of life!