

THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

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RELIGIOUS FORUM

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SPALDING UNIVERSITY

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LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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MONDAY

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (9:49 a.m.)

3 MAYOR ABRAMSON: Good morning, everyone.

4 AUDIENCE: Good morning.

5 MAYOR ABRAMSON: That's good. That's
6 good. A religious group, they sort of get into the
7 thing. What about the front row seats? I mean what's
8 the deal about, you know

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Inaudible).

10 MAYOR ABRAMSON: Amen. Amen. I'm sorry
11 we're starting a little late and I'm sorry some of the
12 folks have had difficulty getting into Louisville. It
13 certainly isn't because of the beautiful weather that
14 we're experiencing today. It has to do actually with
15 the difficulties of the storms last night. And
16 fortunately, good Lord willing, that has all passed by
17 and we're now in a position where we can enjoy a
18 beautiful day in Louisville, Kentucky, and welcome to
19 Louisville, the President's Initiative on Race, and
20 the distinguished leaders from the faith-based
21 community gathered here this morning to discuss the
22 all important goal of becoming one America in the 21st
23 Century.

24 I say all important goal because changing

1 demographics really makes diversity a reality in our
2 nation today. Within the next three years, take the
3 state of California as an example, the next three
4 years there will be no single race or ethnic group
5 that will make up a majority of the state's
6 population. So change is happening all around us and
7 the President has asked us as a nation to begin to
8 dialogue and see how we can be prepared for that
9 change.

10 Half a century from now, in fact, there
11 will be no majority at all in the United States of
12 America, in just one half a century. We'll all be
13 just plain old descendants of Africans or Europeans or
14 Asians or Latin Americans, and we'll be equal in
15 number at least when that time comes to this great
16 nation of ours.

17 While this country's promise of freedom,
18 which is symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, brings
19 people from all continents to our land in a wave of
20 immigration as strong as it was a century ago, the
21 question really remains, can we, we as Americans,
22 deliver on that promise? As President Clinton said in
23 announcing the Race Initiative on June 14, 1997,
24 quote, "Building one America is our most important

1 mission, but money can't buy it. Power can't compel
2 it. Technology can't create it. It can only come
3 from human spirit."

4 And so it makes a great deal of sense that
5 those who minister to the spirit, those from the faith
6 community, we turn to you to talk about racial
7 reconciliation and the ability to get along as a
8 nation.

9 In Louisville we have already begun the
10 discussion foreshadowing the national conversation
11 that President Clinton hoped to engender with this
12 Race Initiative. Denise Brown, who's head of our
13 city's Human Relations Commission, spearheaded a race
14 discussion across Louisville in the early 1997, just
15 several years ago.

16 One of those discussions was held in
17 Reverend T. Vaughn Walker's -- First Gethsemane
18 Baptist Church -- and I know he's with us today --
19 where some 16 people gathered in a basement and they
20 talked and they discussed and they dialogued.
21 Sometimes there were moments of wonderful excitement
22 and energy. Sometimes there were moments of great
23 difficulty. But the bottom line was that the dialogue
24 existed and people began to interact. No one will

1 tell you that that dialogue resolved all the
2 differences or that it even came to a resolution in
3 those days at the Gethsemane Church, but to begin
4 talking at all is one big step, albeit one step on the
5 road toward reconciliation.

6 I think it's ironic that we have for the
7 first time in decades peace in our world. We have a
8 booming economy. The job rate is up, the unemployment
9 rate is down. And yet we seem so troubled in our
10 spirits with racial and ethnic tensions mounting in
11 our country and with huge concerns about our children.
12 That's really, as of late, been on the front pages of
13 every paper in this country. Last week *Newsweek*
14 *Magazine* cover was entitled "God Versus Gangs." What's
15 the hottest idea in crime fighting? The power of
16 religion.

17 In our concerns about a nation whose young
18 people seem so troubled, it's not just in the inner-
19 cities across the United States but it's in those
20 world communities also, as we have seen unfortunately
21 as of late in Paduka, Kentucky, in Jonesboro,
22 Arkansas, in Springfield, Oregon where young people
23 with guns are murdering their classmates and their
24 parents. We turn to religion for help. We turn to

1 religion for understanding of just what's going on and
2 what we can do to uplift the spirit.

3 This morning, we turn to you, our
4 religious leaders from throughout this region and some
5 from throughout the country, for help in understanding
6 our racial and ethnic differences. Can we be one
7 America respecting and even celebrating in our
8 diversity, in our differences, while embracing even
9 more the bonds that are common among us all? Can we
10 learn to talk together? Can we learn to act together
11 to build one America?

12 The future of our country requires, in my
13 judgment, that we answer that question yes. In fact,
14 we answer both those questions yes. We have no
15 choice, but to sincerely say yes will be very hard.
16 Our hearts are willing but our history tells us that
17 the road is very difficult and filled with a lot of
18 obstacles. But I have hope and I know you do, too,
19 that we can resolve and move forward together as a
20 nation.

21 As the Chinese poet Lu Zon -- once said,
22 "Hope is like a path in the countryside. Originally,
23 there is no path but, as people walk all the time over
24 and over along the same spot, a path appears." I

1 believe our path to the future can appear if we take
2 that first step, we take it together, and we take it
3 today.

4 Welcome to Louisville, Kentucky.

5 (Applause)

6 MAYOR ABRAMSON: You know, it isn't every
7 day when you're the Mayor of the City of Louisville
8 that you have the opportunity to bring to the podium
9 and introduce a president of an outstanding
10 educational institution, a gentleman who's been with
11 us here at Spalding for several years and has taken
12 the student body from 1,000 to over 1,500 which
13 happens to be the largest increase of any college in
14 the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

15 He came to us from Georgetown University
16 in Washington. Spalding University here in this
17 community has been a tremendous institution for many,
18 many years but Doctor Oates' leadership has taken it
19 to a new level. Let me introduce to you the host here
20 at the Eagan Center at Spalding University, the host
21 of this conference, Doctor Tom Oates.

22 (Applause)

23 DOCTOR OATES: Good morning. It's truly
24 an honor to welcome all of you to Spalding University

1 and to this conference. This program today is a
2 wonderful example of the way in which Spalding
3 University can and will cooperate with the City of
4 Louisville and the faith community of Louisville to
5 build a stronger and deeper faith for justice and
6 peace. A commitment to justice and peace is actually
7 in our mission statement in the very first line of our
8 mission statement.

9 Spalding University is a Catholic
10 university founded by the Sisters of Charity of
11 Nazareth and, as such, the university both respects
12 and supports the spiritual beliefs of all people. It
13 may be interesting to some of you who don't know the
14 university well that the university has never had a
15 majority Catholic population, and we feel that is a
16 way of living out our Catholicity. Spalding is also
17 an urban university and, as such, the university has
18 the responsibility to encourage and participate in
19 discussions like this one, which strengthens this
20 community.

21 I was asked this morning by Wayne Perky --
22 very early this morning by Wayne Perky on the radio
23 interview if I felt programs like this were truly
24 productive or are they just so much talk. I thought

1 that was an interesting question from a radio
2 announcer. I responded that I felt they were very
3 productive because one of the great untapped powers in
4 our society I feel is the power of faith and belief.
5 We often hear about the power of war to disrupt our
6 world, about the power of hate to divide people, but
7 we seldom recognize and celebrate and act on the power
8 of belief and the power of faith that all of you
9 represent today. Programs like this one are
10 extraordinarily powerful and they can touch and
11 mobilize our lives and transform our world if we let
12 them.

13 So what we do today is, in my sense, the
14 most meaningful kind of program we can have and
15 Spalding University is honored both to host and to
16 participate in it. I thank you all for being here.

17 My next responsibility is to introduce
18 Bishop Thomas Kelly. Archbishop Thomas Kelly has been
19 the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Louisville since
20 February 18, 1992, 16 years. Before coming to
21 Louisville, he served as the General Secretary for the
22 Bishop's Conference in Washington, D.C. and he also
23 served as the Auxiliary Bishop for Washington, D.C.

24 He holds a doctorate in canon law from St.

1 Thomas University in Rome. Bishop Kelly is a strong
2 and close friend of Spalding University and he brings
3 to the university and to all of us in Louisville a
4 warmth and compassion and a human side to the faith
5 community. He also is, I think, arguably the best
6 storyteller that I've met in a long time. I often
7 share the podium with Bishop Kelly at graduations and
8 he always has the best story. He is a person who I
9 consider a personal friend and a mentor and I'd like
10 to invite him to come and do our invocation this
11 morning.

12 BISHOP KELLY: It was kind of Doctor Oates
13 to refer to my background in Washington. I lived
14 there for a long, long time and while I was there, and
15 I think by then I had become a Bishop, the majority of
16 the demographics of Washington shifted from white to
17 African-American and I was preaching one day at the
18 Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, a great, big,
19 huge place the size of a railroad station and I said
20 to the folks assembled there, All I can say about this
21 shift in our cultural and ethnic background and our
22 population is this. I hope the new majority, that is
23 the African-Americans, will be a lot kinder to us, the
24 new minority, than we have ever been to them. That

1 still haunts me.

2 I'm very grateful for the opportunity to
3 have a word as we begin this important symposium on
4 moving toward oneness in America.

5 In your packages is a letter from one of
6 our Louisvillians, Paul Whitely --, who quotes Doctor
7 Martin Luther King. I'd just like to pick out a
8 little paragraph to share. These are the words of
9 Martin.

10 "So here we are moving toward the exit of
11 the 20th century with a religious community largely
12 adjusted to the status quo, standing as a taillight
13 behind other community agencies rather than a
14 headlight, leading men and women to higher levels of
15 justice."

16 Martin pointed the way for us against the
17 sin of racism but moving toward a spirit of unity and
18 of courage and conviction. It's in the light of that
19 that I ask you to join me in prayer.

20 Lord, we honor your servant, Martin Luther
21 King. He was a faithful witness to your word, even to
22 the point of laying down his life for it. Now,
23 increase our faith. Make us better witnesses to your
24 word. Free us from our sinfulness, from racism and

1 violence. Banish the hatred that besets our world.
2 Fill us with the spirit of your love that we may work
3 effectively to establish in the human family respect
4 for one another, your gift of peace.

5 Oh God of perfect peace, racial
6 discrimination and cruelty can have no part with you.
7 May those who are racial enemies of one another
8 abandon their fears and selfishness and be healed.
9 May those gathered here before you who cherish the
10 gift of peace and racial harmony be strong in our
11 conviction to witness to your truth and love. May we
12 hold fast to the good will that unites us. We ask
13 this of You, Father, God of Peace, who live and reign
14 forever and ever. Amen.

15 MS. GLASER: If you all can join me in
16 thanking Archbishop Kelly. That was a really
17 wonderful way to start the morning.

18 (Applause)

19 MS. GLASER: My name is Danielle Glaser
20 and I'm with the President's Initiative on Race in the
21 Outreach Division and, as you can see from your
22 agenda, we've had a few minor changes. I am not the
23 Reverend Doctor Suzan Johnson Cook, although I wish I
24 was, and if she was here today, she would say this.

1 I'm so ignited, excited and delighted to be with you
2 all here today, and she would really get you revved
3 up. So I'll do the best that I can. But we would
4 definitely like to thank Mayor Abramson and his staff
5 for the great cooperation and hospitality, especially
6 Morris Hemis --, and also Doctor Oates for letting us
7 use the facility and his staff for their hospitality
8 and support. If you could all join me in thanking
9 them.

10 (Applause)

11 MS. GLASER: And before I go over the
12 revised agenda for today and the accomplishments of
13 the Race Initiative for the last year, I'd like to
14 share a message from the President.

15 (A videotape is played.)

16 PRESIDENT CLINTON: I'd like to welcome
17 you and thank you for participating in this important
18 conversation about race in America. America has
19 always stood for the shining ideal that we're all
20 created equal. We haven't always lived up to that
21 ideal, but it has guided our way for more than two
22 centuries and, as we enter the 21st century, we know
23 that one of the greatest challenges we still face is
24 learning how we can come together as one America.

1 America will soon be the most diverse
2 nation in the world. Will those differences divide us
3 or will they be our greatest strength? The answer
4 depends upon what we are willing to do together. We
5 must confront our differences in honest dialogue, but
6 we must also talk about the common dreams and the
7 values that we share. We must fight discrimination in
8 our communities and in our hearts and we must close
9 the opportunity gaps that divide too many Americans in
10 real life.

11 That is why I launched this National
12 Initiative on Race and I'm very glad you're joining.
13 Your views, your ideas, they're very important. I ask
14 you to share them with Doctor Franklin and the members
15 and the members of my Advisory Board. They're helping
16 me reach out to communities like yours all across our
17 nation. I look forward to hearing from them about the
18 results of your conversation.

19 Please go back to your neighborhoods, your
20 schools, your work places, your places of worship and
21 continue this conversation about race. Take a
22 leadership role. Together we can build a stronger
23 America through the 21st Century as one America.
24 Thank you for helping us to meet this most important

1 challenge.

2 DOCTOR JOHNSON COOK: Good morning. I'm
3 Reverend Doctor Susan Johnson Cook. I am Pastor of
4 Bronx Christian Fellowship and I'm the only faith
5 leader on the President's Initiative on Race, and it's
6 good to be here. Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 DOCTOR JOHNSON COOK: Thank you. We have
9 had a time. I know I'm filled with faith. We were on
10 the ground five hours last night, finally get to New
11 York. There was a storm all up and down the east
12 coast. But even with my faith, I was glad to be on
13 the ground. Amen. Must better to be down on the
14 ground than up in the air crying Hallelujah.

15 (Laughter)

16 DOCTOR JOHNSON COOK: So I'm glad to be
17 here. I'm a Baptist preacher from the Bronx and so
18 it's just good to be here and to greet you on behalf
19 of the President. I've had an exciting last 12 months
20 with Dr. John Hope Franklin -- as our Chair and six
21 other Advisory Board Members. We come from all
22 different walks of life across America, but we bonded
23 together and we've listened to people all across
24 America, faith communities, corporate communities,

1 grassroots. We've talked with everyone, we've heard
2 from everyone, and we're just glad to be in Louisville
3 today and we really appreciate the hospitality in
4 your receiving us. And please receive that from me.

5 Today we have an exciting day. This
6 initiative was announced by our President just about
7 a year ago. I was at the Hampton University
8 Minister's Conference, which many of you attend. It's
9 the largest gathering of African-American clergy in
10 the world. I got a call from the President's office
11 asking me if I would serve on this initiative. And,
12 as we've gone around the country this past year
13 particularly, we've had students on campuses.
14 Approximately 600 college and university campuses have
15 participated in dialogue. We've had more than 100
16 YWCAs and communities throughout the country. We've
17 had 41 governors participating. It's been an inter-
18 agency effort. Every Cabinet Secretary has been with
19 us and many travel with us, and we also just recently
20 had an ESPN forum on youth in Houston and it was
21 wonderful, exciting event.

22 This forum for religious leaders is the
23 second of two. We just held one recently on May 21st
24 in New Orleans and it was a tremendous success. One

1 of the high points of the day was the breakout
2 sessions that happened after the lunch hour where you
3 would have an opportunity to dialogue. We don't want
4 to just speak to you, we want to hear from you and
5 want you also to talk to each other about race. And
6 so we hope that we will be fully engaged this day and
7 that we can learn together from these forums that true
8 leaders can create and build one America in the 21st
9 Century.

10 For today, our agenda. We want to do
11 three things. The first is to gain an understanding
12 of the increasingly diverse faith community. We come
13 now from so many different walks of life. We want to
14 identify the key elements that make for successful
15 racial reconciliation efforts and we want to work
16 together to plan ways in which we can further energize
17 and mobilize our faith community.

18 Last September we had a Faith Leaders
19 Forum at the White House, a breakfast, and many of the
20 faith leaders said this is what we need to do. We
21 need to take the initiative to the people who really
22 work in the community. And so we'll begin today with
23 a speaker and then a panel to discuss the changing
24 face of faith in America. President Clinton talked

1 about the fact that we know what we'll look like in
2 the next millennium but we don't know what we'll be
3 like, and so we want people to know what we'll look
4 like in terms of religion as well as how we want to
5 function together as faith leaders coming from all
6 walks of life.

7 There'll be an opportunity for questions
8 and comments from the audience following this panel.
9 After that, we'll then discuss promising practices
10 which is a key part of this initiative that we've seen
11 around the country and then Reverend Doctor Tony
12 Campolo of the Evangelical Association for the
13 Promotion of Education in St. Davis, Pennsylvania will
14 deliver the keynote address. He is somebody's
15 preacher. And then we'll reconvene after lunch to
16 hear a panel on the key elements of success. What
17 makes some programs succeed where others fail.

18 And finally the critical part which I
19 share with you involves each of you who are here, the
20 breakout groups where you can discuss what you've
21 heard, relate it to others and your own efforts and
22 share ideas on what can be done. We really want to
23 know some things that can be done because no one has
24 all the answers as we face the issue of race. And so

1 I'll describe the classes later as we go further in
2 the agenda.

3 At this point, however, it is my pleasure
4 to present to some and introduce to others Doctor
5 Diana Eck who will provide us with a multimedia
6 presentation on the changing face of faith. Diana Eck
7 is Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian
8 Studies at Harvard University where she is Chair of
9 the Committee on the Study of Religion in the Faculty
10 of Arts and Sciences. She's also a member of the
11 Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies as well as
12 the Faculty of Divinity.

13 I've heard much about her and I got a
14 chance to work with her at the Harvard Divinity
15 School. It's good to see you again. And she's
16 currently a member of the International Presidium of
17 the World Conference on Religion and Peace. It is my
18 pleasure this morning to introduce Doctor Diana L.
19 Eck. Won't you receive her as she comes.

20 (Applause)

21 DOCTOR ECK: Have you got my thing up on
22 the screen now? It's a great pleasure to be here and
23 talk about the changing face of religion in America in
24 the context of the President's Initiative on Race.

1 And I want to begin this by casting our minds back to
2 1965, a year in which many of you, I'm sure, were
3 working on the Civil Rights Act, and talk about
4 something else that happened in 1965 which was a new
5 immigration act that brought to an end an immigration
6 policy that had been shaped over the years by
7 exclusion based on race.

8 That immigration policy had many chapters
9 going back to 1882 with the first Chinese Exclusion
10 Act and continuing right up through the Johnson-Reed
11 Act of 1924 that effectively closed off immigration,
12 especially immigration from Asia and many other parts
13 of the world. But with the civil rights movement of
14 the '50s and '60s, it began to be clear that we could
15 not have an immigration policy based on racism if we
16 were working against racism in every other aspect of
17 our lives.

18 Robert Kennedy as Attorney General,
19 speaking in favor of the Immigration Act in Congress,
20 said, "Everywhere in our national life we are trying
21 to eliminate discrimination based on national origin
22 and yet it is still the basis of our immigration
23 policy." And so the 1965 Immigration Act, in a sense
24 a kind of a tandem of the Civil Rights Act, was a

1 catalyst of many of the kinds of the changes that
2 we've begun to see in American society, especially in
3 the last 30 years.

4 This new immigration, as it's sometimes
5 called, from Asia, from Africa, the Middle East, Latin
6 America, has changed the face of America. We know
7 that it's changed our faith, our faces in terms of our
8 racial composition, and it also has changed our faces
9 in terms of our religious composition. We, the people
10 of the United States of America. Who do we mean when
11 we say we? Probably the most important question that
12 any people ever face. And we can no longer speak of
13 religion as if we lived in America of the 1950s in
14 which the sociologist Bill Herberg -- described us as
15 a three religion nation: Protestant, Catholic and
16 Jewish.

17 Today, our "we" as Americans include
18 Buddhist Americans like the Hawaiian born Buddhist
19 astronaut who died on the Challenger. It includes
20 Muslim Americans like the first Muslim who was
21 commissioned in 1996 only as a chaplain in the U.S.
22 Navy. Muslim Americans like the Muslim major in the
23 Oklahoma City Fire Department who spent two weeks
24 working in the rubble of the Morrow Federal Building.

1 Our "we" includes Hindu and Jains and
2 Sikhs and surgeons and political advisors from South
3 Asia. It includes Native American legislators and
4 activists. It includes Christians now of all races
5 and denominations: Hispanic Pentecostalist, the black
6 Baptists and Vietnamese Catholics and Korean
7 Presbyterians. It includes Jews from Black Coat
8 Labrators -- to Reform women rabbis. It includes
9 Baha'is and Unitarians and our we also has to include
10 a wide range of people who exercise the freedom to
11 stand outside all of our faith communities as ardent
12 secularists or ethical humanists.

13 So that's who we are, you might say,
14 religiously now in the 1990s. More of us are Muslims
15 than Episcopalians. More of us are Muslims than
16 members of the Presbyterian Church USA with its
17 headquarters right here in Louisville. There are
18 nearly as many Muslims as Jews in the United States.
19 Some four to six million Muslims, more than a quarter
20 African-American Muslims. We don't take a religious
21 census but we literally in one sense do now know who
22 we are religiously beyond some of these rough
23 statistics. How many Hindus? How many Buddhists?
24 How many Sikhs and others? Of course, we're still

1 basking in the majority Christians of our various
2 denominations but, large and small, our religious
3 minorities in America have reshaped the religious
4 landscape for all of us. It's not about numbers.
5 It's about how we deal with our differences.

6 And we hear this term multi-cultural.
7 Some people think multi-cultural is some sort of
8 ideology invented by people like me in universities to
9 describe what's happening in the U.S. Multi-cultural
10 is a fact of our lives. This diversity is a fact of
11 our city. This is our new cultural myth.

12 And my focus as a researcher in the last
13 few years has been to develop a project called the
14 Pluralism Project that really investigates the
15 changing religious dimensions of this new multi-
16 cultural myth. My students have fanned out over the
17 summers to their home towns all over America to
18 document the changing face of religious America. We
19 produced a CD ROM which you see on the screen here
20 asking three kinds of questions.

21 The first, a new religious landscape.
22 What changes have taken place in the religious
23 landscape of our cities and towns with new Islamic
24 centers and temples of Buddhists and Hindus. Second,

1 how are our religious traditions changing as they
2 grapple with this new reality of America and its many
3 problems in the 20th Century? Not just how are
4 Buddhists doing as Buddhism takes root in American
5 soil, but how are Christians and Jews doing as they
6 begin to encounter the reality of Buddhist neighbors?

7 And a third question, how is America
8 changing as the freedom of religion exercised by and
9 cherished by America's founders is now cherished by
10 Muslims and Buddhists and Sikhs and Hindus who have
11 come to America as immigrants. And to talk about some
12 of these questions, how we relate to one another, we
13 invite an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi, a Native American
14 Muskogee Crete Indian, a liberal Christian theologian,
15 a Muslim seminist lawyer, and the Russian Orthodox --
16 sets the stage.

17 (A videotape is played.)

18 NARRATOR: What America means to Jews
19 after centuries of being persecuted precisely because
20 of the way we look -- and for the first time in a
21 place where it's perfectly all right for them to wear
22 a black top coat -- He appreciates it because America
23 gives him a chance to be himself without losing his
24 humanity.

1 NARRATOR: We talk about religious freedom
2 in this country and yet the first people who were here
3 are still suffering. Many people are very touched by
4 the sensitivity that has to be shown to Jewish people
5 and to the Hindus and to the Muslims, but yet you have
6 a whole group of people who are already here who
7 already had spirituality and no one realizes that this
8 group is still fighting to be able to practice what
9 they did freely before colonization. I can not say
10 that I'm an American. I'm a Muskogee Crete Indian and
11 that's who I am.

12 NARRATOR: I think what's powerful about
13 America is that there is the possibility for exploring
14 community amidst diversity. What's frightening is
15 that we have a history of people imposing their own
16 understanding of life on everyone else and so we don't
17 have a good record of even being willing to engage
18 around the question, but the possibility still exists
19 that we can explore what it means to be a prolific
20 society in ways that other countries don't have the
21 possibility of exploring.

22 NARRATOR: It's a brand new experiment in
23 human history that we have here, and I think we ought
24 to be appreciative of that. It's an absolutely

1 phenomenal opportunity that's been given to the United
2 States of America. We have people from all over the
3 world. We have people of virtually every religious
4 tradition there is. Whether we are going to make it
5 as a people with this immense rich heterogenous
6 population or whether we're going to burst apart into
7 some kind of fragmentation is still a question in my
8 mind.

9 NARRATOR: I used to be very critical of
10 the U.S. in the early days. When I got into the
11 reasons for this, I started seeing America for what I
12 think it really is. Everybody has -- essentially
13 it's a place where everybody has a seat at the table
14 and can be counted and will not be silenced. and you
15 might say, oh, but that, you know, it goes against
16 everything we know about what's happening on race
17 issues, etcetera. And I tell you yes, that's true --
18 but the thing is you can stand up and say I don't like
19 your racism, I don't like your parochialism. I can
20 talk to somebody and say you're silencing me a -- I
21 can talk about these things and struggle with it and
22 fight about it so that the ideal of America one day
23 will come to be true.

24 DOCTOR ECK: The religious landscape of

1 America is changing in all of our cities and towns in
2 ways that for many of us are invisible. If you want
3 to look at the first generation of Islamic centers in
4 the recent immigration, in the last 30 years, you
5 would have to go to places like a former watch factory
6 in Queens or a mattress showroom in North Ridge,
7 California or a U-Haul dealership in Pawtucket, Rhode
8 Island. You could drive right by and not notice there
9 was anything different about this neighborhood.

10 But in looking for these places, we've
11 gradually begun to see that there's a visible
12 landscape as well and that the visibility of our
13 communities of faith has also at time become their
14 vulnerability, and we'll talk more about that later.
15 But here's a glimpse of some of the landscape you may
16 or may not have seen.

17 America has always had a religious
18 landscape. Its mountains, forests, waters have been
19 cherished by native people and throughout the history
20 of this land, newcomers have brought their distinctive
21 religious traditions. The multitude and range of
22 Christian churches, the diversity and vibrance of
23 Jewish synagogues have long been part of religious
24 America.

1 Today the religious landscape of America
2 is changing rapidly. In a leafy suburb of Boston not
3 far from the starting point of the Boston Marathon,
4 the Hindu Community of New England has built a new
5 temple consecrated with the waters of Indian's Ganges
6 River -- mingled with the waters of the Mississippi.
7 It is one of dozens of brand new American Hindu
8 temples on a hilltop in Chicago or in the suburbs of
9 Atlanta, Georgia. There are Hindu summer camps in the
10 countryside of Pennsylvania.

11 Just off the interstate outside Toledo,
12 Ohio a new musjud or mosque rises from the corn
13 fields. Today the call to prayer may be heard in the
14 new Islamic Center in New York City or in the old
15 mother mosque of America in Cedar Rapids, Iowa or in
16 the dramatic landscape of New Mexico. Buddhists light
17 incense and offer prayer on the island of Honolulu and
18 in the heartland of America in Oklahoma City.
19 Building Buddhist temples has brought the
20 architectural traditions of Asia to America. The
21 largest Buddhist temple in the western hemisphere is
22 in Hacienda Heights, California.

23 In Blairstown, New Jersey the Jains --
24 have opened a religious retreat center and in

1 Bartlett, Illinois this ancient religious community
2 rooted in India has built a spectacular new temple.
3 The Sikh community also has its roots in India. Its
4 places of worship called Gurdwaras may be found from
5 Glen Rock, New Jersey all across America to El
6 Sabrante, California.

7 The ancient Zoroaster community comes to
8 America from Iran and India and has built new temples
9 in San Jose and in Garden Grove, California. A
10 landmark Baha'i Temple rises in Wilmett, Illinois. A
11 Shinto Shrine brings traditions of Japan to Stockton,
12 California. A multitude of tiny botanicas signal the
13 presence of a new Afro-Caribbean community and open
14 air rituals link pagan traditions to the land.

15 All over America there are new neighbors
16 today. The Cambodian Buddhist Temple and the Muslim
17 Community Center are next door neighbors in Silver
18 Spring, Maryland along with the Ukrainian Orthodox
19 Church and the Mongol Munder Hindu Temple. Atonement
20 Lutheran Church in San Diego sits right next door to
21 the new Islamic Center and in Fremont, California a
22 Methodist Church and a mosque are building side by
23 side on the street they have named Peace Terrace. All
24 these traditions have now made a physical difference

1 in America's religious landscape.

2 That Methodist Church and the Mosque
3 building on Peace Terrace in Fremont, California
4 might well be an example of one of those promising
5 practices. People actually affirmed being neighbors
6 to one another, practicing it, living it out. We have
7 a screen here that gives us an indication of what our
8 quote "community of faith" looks like. It's not one
9 community at all, but multiple communities, many
10 religious traditions. And our challenge is to take
11 this diversity and create something that we really
12 could call pluralism. Diversity is not pluralism in
13 and of itself. It's just diversity, a fact, not a
14 vision. But pluralism is something we actually have
15 to create. It implies not just live and let live
16 diversity but the active engagement with one another
17 across the lines of our differences. It's not the
18 melting away of our differences but the symphony of
19 our differences, if you want to put it that way, or
20 perhaps even better, the jazz of our differences
21 because symphonies are concluded and jazz is
22 improvisational, but it requires creating music out of
23 that difference by listening to and hearing the music
24 of one another in the kind of dialogue that these

1 forums are intended to create. That is pluralism.

2 But if we want to talk about how it's
3 going in America of the 1990s in that encounter with
4 religious diversity, we have some challenges to look
5 at and this screen says Today's Challenges. That's
6 probably about all of it you can see. But there are
7 two pictures here. One of them in the upper left hand
8 corner is a small image of the ground breaking of a
9 new Islamic Center in Sharon, Massachusetts in the
10 spring of 1993. This Islamic community had had a hard
11 time acquiring property. In fact, it had been turned
12 down by another suburb in Milton. It was then this
13 suburb of Sharon, more than half Jewish, opened its
14 arms to the new Islamic Center and this inter-faith
15 ground breaking with dozens of Jewish and Christian
16 religious leaders participating was a ground breaking
17 in virtually every sense of the word.

18 The image in the lower right hand corner
19 tells another story, and that's also an American story
20 today. A mosque nearly completed in Yuba City,
21 California burned to the ground by an arson attack in
22 September of 1994, its arches and minarets lying in a
23 pile of ash. As we know too well, our religious
24 communities have as their visible markers those

1 institutions, those churches and synagogues and
2 cemeteries and mosques that stand in a way for the
3 soul of the community. We know the history of black
4 churches, of the desecration of Jewish cemeteries.
5 But violence like the arson attack in Yuba City is
6 often directed against unfamiliar religious
7 institutions and in 1995 alone the Council on
8 American-Islamic Relations, a newly formed
9 organization that is somewhat like the Anti-Defamation
10 League, reported the arson of a mosque in Highpoint,
11 North Carolina in April, Springfield, Illinois in
12 June, Greenville, South Carolina in October.

13 Today's challenges are many and, if we ask
14 that question, will our differences divide us, as the
15 President just asked, or will they be our greatest
16 strength, we have to ask how is it going and how will
17 we find out. How is it going, the creation of one
18 America? Will our future will be one of inter-faith
19 ground breaking or incidents of arson? Will we
20 encounter one another across the lines of our
21 difference or will we shrink from one another in
22 suspicion and fear? Where do we look for finding
23 answers to that question?

24 If you want to find out how we're doing,

1 I would suggest this. Go to your zoning board where
2 Vietnamese Buddhists, for example, in southern
3 California struggle to get clearance to build a
4 temple, where Muslims in Fairfax County, Virginia
5 struggle against stereotype to get clearance to open
6 a school.

7 Go to your local newspaper where incidents
8 of vandalism are reported, often on the back pages.
9 The Hindu Jane Temple in Pittsburgh, for example,
10 broken into, its deity smashed and the word leave
11 scrawled across the alter or a tiny Cambodian Temple
12 in Portland, Maine, its door hacked down with an axe,
13 the contents of the Buddha Hall strewn in the yard,
14 the words "Dirty Asian Chinks, go home" written on the
15 wall.

16 Or go to a public school, the front lines
17 of encountering this new multi-religious reality with
18 religious issues so complex on the ground in our
19 public schools that the Dallas Independent School
20 District convened a religious leader's task force of
21 Buddhists and Sikhs and Hindus and Catholics and
22 Muslims and Jews to provide advice. Or go to our
23 colleges and universities where the presence of
24 students of many faiths has challenged and, in many

1 cases, changed the shape of our chaplaincy. Come to
2 my own university, that old Puritan university in the
3 northeast, where the day after tomorrow on
4 Baccalaureate there will be readings from the Holy
5 Koran in Arabic and from the Hindu Hanasha in Sanskrit
6 along with more traditional readings from the Bible.

7 Or go to our hospitals where questions of
8 critical care for patients of many faiths are on the
9 agenda or go to our corporations where the question of
10 religious diversity in the work place is moving to the
11 front burner. At Whirlpool the issue of religious
12 accommodation for Muslims, at Sambo's, can a turbaned
13 Sikh wear a turban in a family restaurant or at US
14 Air, can a Muslim woman wear hajab a head scarf and
15 work as a flight attendant? Or go to our public
16 institutions where religious minorities are
17 increasingly claiming a visible face in one America.

18 June of 1991, Aman Sarad Swahad of
19 Brooklyn for the first time in history opens a session
20 of the U.S. House of Representatives with a daily
21 prayer. February of 1996, for the first time in
22 history the Clintons welcome Muslims to the White
23 House on the occasion of Edal Fitri at the end of the
24 month of Ramadan. Or go to the burgeoning number of

1 inter-faith councils across America in cities and
2 towns, Lincoln, Nebraska to Rochester, New York, where
3 there are new instruments of relationship in the
4 public square addressing issues of urban violence, of
5 inter-religious understanding.

6 So how are we doing with all this
7 difference? Are we practicing a symphony or creating
8 cacophony? Is it jazz or is it just noise, the
9 piercing interplay of sirens and gunshot? Are we a
10 nation undergoing what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has
11 called the disuniting of America? Too much pluribus,
12 not enough unum? Or are we in the difficult process
13 of creating a much needed and very important model of
14 a multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-religious
15 society?

16 The answer to these questions is being
17 written now in this decade in cities and towns all
18 over America in this critical chapter of American
19 history and I don't have the answer to this question
20 but I have brought along that group of friends with me
21 who have their views about our differences. Thinking
22 about differences in the public square. Will our
23 differences divide us or become our deepest and most
24 vibrant source of strength?

1 (A videotape is played.)

2 NARRATOR: There's a verse in the Koran I
3 must mention to you. It says that "God has created
4 us, nations and tribes, so that we get to know the
5 father." So it is for communication, not for
6 confrontation, that God created us as different, i.e.,
7 not to feel superior about each other but to know, to
8 interact, diversity to be celebrated.

9 NARRATOR: I celebrate, I enjoy the multi-
10 ethnicity of -- in every tradition because that helps
11 me to understand something about the human nature,
12 that we are not the same. We have multiple identities
13 and multiple ways of looking at experience in life. So
14 Christianity itself, Christianity alone can not
15 provide a comprehensive way of living and attitude.

16 NARRATOR: There are a lot of people out
17 there who still had that mentality that when you come
18 to dialogue we've got to make them all Christians and
19 that's not it at all. They're missing the point
20 altogether because they're really coming to build some
21 bridges and to further your own understanding about
22 who you are and to say "I'm in dialogue with you
23 because this is who I am and I want to know who you
24 are."

1 NARRATOR: I have a feeling sometimes
2 these conferences and so on, maybe not even accomplish
3 as much as just going over the fence and talking to
4 your neighbor. Dialogue can happen when I'm living
5 next to a Christian neighbor and they find out I'm a
6 Buddhist and at first they don't know what that means.
7 But slowly they see that I'm taking out my trash every
8 day, they see that I'm not burning bodies in the back
9 yard. Then they begin to interact with you as a human
10 being and the kinds of things you might say to your
11 neighbor who's of a different faith about the lawn,
12 about taking out recycling, about the everyday things
13 which on occasion include something about their
14 religious life, a holiday coming up, or my religious
15 life. I'm practicing meditation at 6 in the morning.
16 I'm sorry the bells are ringing. That kind of thing
17 has an actual practical effect in which neighbors of
18 different faiths come to know each other in a very
19 natural way.

20 NARRATOR: I'm reminded of a time when my
21 dear friend, the Anglican priest in town, on Christmas
22 Eve -- I mean it's got to be the busiest time of the
23 year for him. I mean, it's got to be crazy busy.
24 What does he do? He comes to the Rabbi's house with

1 a present. This had your name on it. It was under
2 our tree and we weren't sure you would know to come
3 over to visit our tree to claim your present. That,
4 to me, is religious diversity. When I invite him back
5 to have Sabbath dinner with us, I hope he gets the
6 same sense of loving generosity and treatment back
7 from me.

8 NARRATOR: What matters is that people
9 connect on a grass roots level and begin to learn
10 about each other's lives. All of us become learners
11 again when we approach the idea of really creating a
12 pluralistic community. And it's really going to be
13 hard work.

14 DOCTOR ECK: And that's our last word.
15 And it's going to be hard for us. Thank you very much
16 and at this point I'd like to invite the three people
17 who are going to be our panelists for the rest of the
18 morning to come forward. Doctor Robert Henderson,
19 Kunwar Bhatnagar and Sister Aminah Assilmi. We'll
20 begin with the panel in which each of them will talk
21 from their own perspective about some of the things
22 that are most on their minds as they think about these
23 questions of religious communities and the race
24 initiative. And then we're going to open it to you to

1 make your own comments and questions, coming forward
2 to the mike. That will be after a few minutes. So if
3 I can have our panelists come forward and be seated,
4 we'll begin this next part of the program. Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 DOCTOR ECK: I'm going to be a strict
7 disciplinarian. Each of our panelists gets about
8 three minutes to say what's most on his or her mind
9 about the issues that we're discussing today. Then
10 we're going to have a bit of a discussion amongst
11 ourselves here. But first let me introduce Doctor
12 Robert Henderson, Secretary-General and the CEO of the
13 National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is in the
14 United States headquartered in Wilmette, Illinois. In
15 addition to being a leader of the national governing
16 body of the Baha'i community, Doctor Henderson has
17 published several articles and books on management
18 systems in-service programs. Doctor Henderson.

19 DOCTOR HENDERSON: Well, good morning.
20 I'm happy to be here this morning and I want you to
21 know that in the Baha'i teachings, the eradication of
22 racial prejudice and building of race unity is not
23 only the driving social development principle but a
24 spiritual commandment of our faith. The Baha'i

1 teachings hold that the eradication of prejudice is
2 the supreme injunction of the Baha'i faith and the
3 hallmark of a true Baha'i character.

4 Now the Baha'i teachings call for action
5 on two fronts. One, the eradication of racial
6 differences within the Baha'i community and, second,
7 fostering what we call unity in diversity in the
8 nation at large, and we've been at that for over 100
9 years. Some recent efforts come to mind and I would
10 commend to your consideration promising practices. in
11 1991 the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of
12 the United States published a statement on the vision
13 of race unity and its relationship to the destiny of
14 the American nation.

15 Concerned about the proliferation of hate
16 crimes and discord among the races and religious
17 groups, the National Spiritual Assembly started a
18 series of studies called Models of Unity, Racial,
19 Ethnic and Religious, in which the specific objective
20 was to identify where people are getting along, how
21 they're doing, what kinds of transformational effects
22 those efforts of inter-racial and inter-religious and
23 inter-ethnic cooperation are having in transforming
24 the character of our communities and our nation and

1 how widespread those are. We've now conducted them in
2 four cities throughout the United States.

3 And currently the American Baha'i
4 community, over 7,000 American Baha'i communities, are
5 involved in concert with the President's Initiative in
6 The Power of Race Unity. This is a handbook which has
7 been distributed to those 7,000 communities who have
8 been asked to hold at least 2,000 gatherings by the
9 Year 2000. This puts it together and this video is
10 being played BET, the Black Entertainment Network,
11 soon on Discovery and the Odyssey channel, to give the
12 vision of America's destiny of unity and diversity and
13 the contribution Baha'is have been making to that.

14 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you very much.

15 (Applause)

16 DOCTOR ECK: Doctor Kunwar Bhatnagar is an
17 old friend from a previous visit to Louisville, the
18 leader of the Hindu Temple of Kentucky in Louisville,
19 which I had the pleasure of visiting, and a professor
20 of anatomical sciences and neural biology for the last
21 26 years at the University of Louisville School of
22 Medicine. He is a scientist of national and
23 international repute. Doctor Bhatnagar.

24 DOCTOR BHATNAGAR: I have three minutes

1 and in three minutes I can only offer a prayer so I
2 offer a prayer.

3 (Whereupon, Dr. Bhatnagar sang a prayer)

4 That's my prayer. I bring salutations to you
5 from the Hindu Temple of Kentucky which is in
6 Louisville and Hindu Temples everywhere in United
7 States and abroad and other places. We at the Temple,
8 do we only pray? No, we do more things than praying.
9 Prayer is an integral part and let me offer my
10 personal viewpoint that religion is a very personal
11 thing between me and the supernatural, the almighty
12 whom we call God. There are other people who
13 intervene, who come in between us, but that is one
14 definition of religion.

15 Hindu Temple, the changing face in
16 Louisville really -- there are Indians, as Professor
17 Eck said earlier, that in 1965 with the opening of the
18 immigration laws, more and more people began to come
19 in. I myself came in 1968 so I came to the United
20 States in that era. My home is an example of
21 integration. I have two daughters. One is married to
22 a Jewish doctor and my other daughter is married to a
23 Catholic person and I have grandchildren I do not know
24 where they will marry. So this is true integration.

1 We all go to each other's services and, regardless of
2 what we pray or what we do, we never question. We
3 just enjoy each other's faith.

4 The Hindu Temple in Louisville, Kentucky
5 is situated on Westport Road and 841. It is open.
6 There are priests, there are deities, there are many
7 deities in the Hindu Temple and the big, great western
8 question is that why Hindus have to have so many gods,
9 emphasis on gods. Western world has given a very poor
10 translation of the word gods. There is only one god
11 in Hinduism. That is Vishnu. All the other so-called
12 deities, they are the highest realized being which
13 are, again using poor terminology from English, minor
14 gods.

15 So at the Hindu Temple we go to the charge
16 of our duties in numerous fields. In science, we have
17 a Nobel prize winning scientist from Chicago.
18 Researchers, medical doctors, surgeons, computer
19 specialists and you see this orange block here,
20 whenever you see this sign, this boldly and pleasantly
21 cries out saying that "brother, you have no fear
22 here." Hindus accept every religion, every faith,
23 everyone and there is -- I'm echoing some original
24 words who came to this country in 1893. "I put this

1 on my shoulder and you have accepted me and my
2 behavior." Hundred years ago Swami Bevikianay
3 (phonetic) was walking in the streets of Chicago with
4 this kind of robe. Somebody pulled his turban from
5 behind on the street. Swami did not pull his gun out.
6 He had no gun, by the way. He turned around to this
7 man and he said, "What pleasure did you derive from
8 this? What did you get?" The man was dumbfounded.
9 He thought that this was an Oriental. For some reason
10 he did not know, was a graduate of Calcutta University
11 and he was speaking better English than many of the
12 people could speak in 1893. So this great man Swami
13 Bevikianay (phonetic), I will only bring you a small
14 quote from him.

15 "After so much perpercia (phonetic) or
16 austerity, I have known that the highest truth is
17 this." I remind you Swami Bevikianay (phonetic) was
18 not an average human being. He is present in all
19 being. These are all the manifested forms of him and
20 please pay attention to the next word, the next
21 sentence that Swami said. "There is no other God to
22 speak for. He alone is worshipping God who serves all
23 beings."

24 This is President Clinton's Initiative on

1 Race. Charity and torture begin from my home but I'm
2 taking a big leap and going straight away to the
3 planet. My vision and my prayer is that we talk of
4 race so that it is of our race. What race? We are, are
5 we not, all human beings? We belong to human race.
6 Once again, my greetings to you and I thank all those
7 who gave me this opportunity for this brief
8 presentation. Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 DOCTOR BHATNAGAR: And one concluding
11 remark. I forget. I'm an absent-minded professor.
12 How many of you have seen or read this book? The
13 title is "Encountering God from Boziman (phonetic) to
14 Benares" The author is Professor Diana Eck. I will
15 say that anybody who talks about race or any such
16 issues, this book should be a required reading. Thank
17 you.

18 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you, Doctor Bhatnagar.

19 Our next panelist is Sister Aminah Assilmi
20 who is the Director of the International Union of
21 Muslim Women. She was raised a Southern Baptist. She
22 chose Islam as her way of life in 1977. And Sister
23 Assilmi serves on the Advisory Board for two of the
24 most energetic new instruments of Islamic

1 participation in the American public square, the
2 American Muslim Council and the Council on American
3 Islamic Relations. Sister Aminah.

4 MS. ASSILMI: Salaam. In Islam we always
5 are to greet everyone with a smiling countenance and
6 a greeting of peace, so I begin with that. And then
7 I move to tell you also that Islam in this country
8 predates Columbus by several hundred years actually.
9 Islam, in spite of that, is always represented as a
10 foreign religion predominantly representative of Arab
11 states. But that's not what it is. The Islamic
12 capacity and we're striving to bring together people
13 of all nationalities.

14 I represent in my own family so many
15 different cultures and so many different religions.
16 We have Southern Baptists, we have Methodists, we have
17 Catholics, we have Hindus, we have Buddhists, we have
18 those who follow what we call the Natural Way, the
19 Native American way, and of course we have a Muslim,
20 or two, or three. We also have all the different
21 nationalities represented within our family because we
22 come from Native American background, North African
23 background, from European background.

24 With all the diversity just within my own

1 family, sometimes things can become interesting. But
2 we have learned what is most important amongst all
3 religions is that we were created by one God, by the
4 creator of all humanity, and we, as we follow our own
5 true traditions, know that we must treat everyone with
6 equality, with respect, with sincerity and with love
7 as is ordered by Allah, by tradition.

8 My family will not be torn apart by our
9 religious differences or by our cultural differences.
10 We believe that the way we've chosen to follow is what
11 will be of most benefit and as we come to understand
12 each other, understand our uniqueness, our
13 differences, not try to change each other but to
14 accept that, to respect that and this is a model of
15 how peace will be achieved. This is how we can
16 finally achieve the goal of wiping out discrimination,
17 wiping out fear and, God willing, wiping out war.

18 There's a lot of misinformation about
19 Islam. In fact, most of what you hear is going to be
20 misinformation about Islam unfortunately. I'm
21 frequently shocked by what I hear. There's a lot of
22 prejudice against Muslims, especially any time
23 something happens that involves the so-called Muslim
24 countries. Over the years, I've experienced many

1 instances. When we bombed Libya, the newspaper ran a
2 title in Denver, Colorado that said, We hit Libya, not
3 Ana" which sounds like a child. That very same day
4 when I was sitting in the Islamic Center, people drove
5 by the nursery and shot holes in the mosque, blew out
6 all of our windows of my car.

7 In California, when Iraq invaded Iran, my
8 little boy, who was in the 5th grade, was beat up by
9 a group of children five years older than he was.
10 They used baseball bats because his name was Mohammed
11 and yet when I went to school to try and find out what
12 we could do, the school would not accept what I said
13 even though there was another witness. She happened to
14 also be a Muslim and they said these people always
15 stick together and they did nothing to protect my
16 child.

17 We face the same problem here in Kentucky.
18 When I moved to Kentucky and my child was attacked
19 repeatedly, his mother was ridiculed which caused a
20 lot of trauma to him, and yet his school would not
21 come forward and have any kind of program where we
22 could introduce the children to Islam, to Muslims, to
23 see that we were not something to be scared of and not
24 something to be hated. We're Americans. We've chosen

1 our path, which is Islam, and Islam is a choice, it's
2 not a birthright. It's not a heredity. It's a
3 choice that we have made.

4 We choose also to remain as Americans. We
5 love this country. We consider ourselves to be very
6 valuable assets to this country and will continue to
7 struggle to try and have other people come to know us
8 so that you will see that we have nothing but peace in
9 our hearts and nothing to offer you but that which you
10 need. Salaam.

11 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you very much.

12 (Applause)

13 DOCTOR ECK: Well, you would think from
14 some of the things we've heard this morning that
15 everything was just fine in terms of our religious
16 communities. We have the challenge from an earlier
17 speaker. Are our religious communities the taillights
18 or the headlights? And I think it's probably true
19 that we hear more in the newspapers about the ways in
20 which we're the taillights. It might be important to
21 begin to share some of the ways in which there is
22 vision and are some headlights here.

23 And I'm wondering, Doctor Henderson, if
24 you would say something very brief about these models

1 of unity that you have discovered in various cities
2 and towns across the country. Where is that we see
3 places where people are coming together across racial-
4 religious lines and doing what you might call pilot
5 projects that would stimulate our discussion here?

6 DOCTOR HENDERSON: I'd be happy to. You
7 know, in the Baha'i teachings the Baha'i is believe in
8 the oneness of humankind. We believe in the unity of
9 religion. We believe that we are all the children of
10 the same loving God and that our object is to bring
11 about the unity of all humankind, the equality of
12 women and men, the eradication of poverty. So one of
13 the obligations of the Baha'i community is to examine
14 how unity is made. We felt that it wasn't enough to
15 analyze conflict and discord, which is everywhere.
16 That's a part of the equation of social change, but it
17 is not sufficient to bring about social transformation
18 or individual change.

19 And so we felt that there was a need for
20 a broad-based research on how people are coming
21 together and whether or not that pattern is
22 significant. And what we found was truly astonishing.
23 First, we found the obvious, that inter-racial and
24 inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflict is

1 everywhere. But then we found the not so obvious. We
2 found that inter-racial, inter-cultural and inter-
3 religious cooperation and development are also
4 everywhere and we found things like the Peace Parish.
5 We found black churches and white churches who had
6 been separated 125 years ago coming back together,
7 brought together by a person of another religion.
8 Three women had met on their job.

9 We found neighborhoods that had been
10 overrun by gangs and by drugs and violence where the
11 parents of different races had been completely
12 alienated, came together in a common concern about
13 their children and were able to eliminate crime
14 completely from that neighborhood, not with the
15 Mayor's Gang Intervention Program, but with the power
16 of unity.

17 We found a whole city in Pasadena where
18 the city had taken, through an initiative of the
19 Western Justice Center and the Baha'i, from the
20 Mayor's office to Chief of Police to the school
21 systems, the newspapers and so on, right on the
22 aftermath of Proposition 187, a very different look at
23 the transformation of that city and has decided to
24 commit itself to becoming a model of unity and has set

1 a program, a multi-year program which they have since
2 funded, to bring about that transformation.

3 And the importance of all these, and I've
4 just mentioned a few of the many that I could mention,
5 government initiatives, big university initiatives,
6 hospital initiatives, corporate initiatives and so on.
7 The importance of this is that in virtually every
8 aspect of life there are these models of unity which
9 are telling us that we have the vision, we have the
10 emotional and spiritual wherewithal and we are
11 beginning to learn the language and the practices of
12 unity.

13 We felt that that information was
14 important to organize so that we might better
15 understand the constituent elements of bringing about
16 unity, understanding, cooperation in social change.

17 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you very much.

18 Let me turn to Doctor Bhatnagar and simply
19 ask about the city of Louisville. Do you see any
20 evidence here of this kind of coming together across
21 lines of religious leaders to create new instruments
22 of cooperation in this city?

23 DOCTOR BHATNAGAR: Yes. I would say so
24 because in the early '80s, since the early '80s I have

1 been part of Kentuckian Interstate Community and there
2 are several inter-faith groups now working in
3 Louisville and there are representatives here in the
4 audience that have inter-faith (inaudible) the Jewish
5 federation of Louisville and Capitol Hereditary
6 Foundation. So I have seen evidence of inter-faith
7 activities a great deal in the last 10 - 15 years and
8 they are being very, very helpful. Most of these
9 organizations have outreach programs available.

10 DOCTOR ECK: So if inter-faith passed the
11 peak, for example, would do what? Are there programs
12 that people could say, this is something that people
13 do together?

14 DOCTOR BHATNAGAR: Yes, yes. We invite
15 people from different sources and they have a board of
16 leaders from various representative faiths and then
17 they do many kinds of activities. I'll give you an
18 example. Just on Memorial Day, a great Memorial Day
19 service was held and eight religions came together.
20 Each one of them offered their prayers and an entire
21 litany of battles was read and they remembered all
22 those great Americans who lost their lives in those
23 battles. So all along the years there are programs
24 like this where people from different faiths and

1 people from different walks of life are coming
2 together.

3 DOCTOR ECK: We're going to turn just a
4 moment to audience discussion, so be thinking of the
5 kind of questions you'd like to ask these people or me
6 and I see that our moderator has also arrived for the
7 morning. Maybe you could moderate that part of the
8 program.

9 And let me just turn to Sister Aminah
10 Assilmi with another kind of question. You're a Euro-
11 American Muslim and people definitely would notice
12 that. That means you're a convert. You've embraced
13 Islam as someone who was not born Muslim. Within the
14 Muslim community, is there a sense of on the whole
15 racial unity or do you kind of stand out among Muslims
16 who have come from so many parts of the world to the
17 Islamic Centers of America? What is your experience
18 in this regard?

19 MS. ASSILMI: There's such cultural
20 diversity at most of the Islamic Centers that I don't
21 stand out any more than anyone else because we have so
22 many countries represented and so many backgrounds
23 represented. And that's one of the things I really
24 enjoy. Our dinners are almost going to a United

1 Nations meeting that actually works.

2 DOCTOR ECK: So when you think about this
3 issue -- I mean is there a distinctive way, and so
4 many have embarked Islam because they really feel that
5 Islam has made real on the promise of a non-racist
6 religion. Is there a contribution that the Muslim
7 community in Louisville and elsewhere is making
8 actively to this discussion of race?

9 MS. ASSILMI: Well, actually, there are
10 several things that FUMWA has going in particular.
11 One of them, we started quite a few years ago working
12 in the public schools trying to educate educators a
13 little bit about Islam, correcting the misinformation
14 in the textbooks. We began talking about Islam but
15 then as we continued on, we discovered that it wasn't
16 just our problem, that there was a cultural diversity
17 that wasn't being taught. There was a cultural
18 diversity that was being ignored and there were
19 children who were being hurt and we couldn't stand by
20 and watch that hurt continue.

21 So we started a program that we now do all
22 over the country where we bring in women -- I don't
23 know why we don't bring in men but right now we just
24 deal with women primarily. Maybe because we're a

1 women's organization. But we bring in women of
2 different faith groups and women of different
3 cultures. Some of the schools would not accept a
4 religious format, so it's called a cultural
5 sensitivity workshop we conduct for educators and
6 sometimes set up programs for the schools where we can
7 introduce the different cultures and religions to the
8 students so they can become familiar with these
9 things.

10 The fear comes from not knowing something.
11 We'll more be inclined to be afraid of something that
12 you don't know. So our hope is by letting people come
13 to know the different religions and different
14 cultures, they can see there is a commonality and
15 there's nothing terribly frightening about that. We
16 have a lot of other programs that we're working with,
17 too, but this is the one right now that we're the most
18 pleased with because we're seeing a difference in
19 schools where they have accepted coming in and doing
20 our workshops and doing the programs with the
21 children. We actually have a week long festival that
22 we try to do with the kids where the children have to
23 see the culture other than one they have in their
24 heritage and they have to learn and live that culture

1 in some small groups and then they can present their
2 experience to the entire school and it's had a
3 wonderful effect on the children when they try to live
4 as a Hindu when they've never met one before.

5 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you very much. It
6 sounds to me as if, even from the panel here, we have
7 a few things that might be written up for that list of
8 500 or should we make it 1,000 promising practices.
9 But now is your chance to ask questions. We have some
10 time for questions, responses from the panel. And, if
11 it's not a question, your own comments or experience.
12 We're asking people to limit themselves to no more
13 than two minutes and if you can, make your way to the
14 microphone in the center so that everyone can hear
15 you. We have a pretty good space in this room but I
16 think for our purposes it would be best if you came
17 to a microphone so you don't have to raise your hand
18 and, in many cases, if you do raise your hand, I might
19 not see you. But if I do, I'll ask you to come to the
20 microphone and I see someone coming right down the
21 front aisle as I speak. So identify yourself.
22 Perhaps contextualize yourself and your community here
23 and tell us what's on your mind.

24 MR. SHARIF: Greetings. My name is G.A.

1 Sharif. I just wanted to comment that inter-faith
2 activity in Louisville is in a very high gear. We
3 work with rabbis and priests and many other
4 organizations. One incident that helped us most I
5 wanted to share with you and then let it be --

6 There was a -- there still is what is
7 called a Task Core Force for the National
8 (unintelligible) and that group has been holding
9 public celebrations in Louisville and then one year --
10 this was about couple of years ago -- the head person
11 of that committee invited a couple of rabbis and a
12 couple of priests, including a Greek Orthodox Priest
13 whom I am very close to them. So when they were
14 invited they said, "Oh, this is great. We need to
15 expand the prayer services" and in the planning
16 meeting they said, "We need to include reading from
17 the Koran and we want Doctor Sharif to read that.
18 Immediately the Chairperson said, "I'm sorry. My
19 instructions from Colorado Springs is that this is a
20 closed organization. Only today are Christians
21 worshipping he held in this." And then immediately
22 the rabbis as well as the priests, they protested,
23 left the committee and they made it a front page
24 newspaper article.

1 And that really helped a great deal, the
2 fact that they came to the aid of the Muslim community
3 and we are very appreciative of that. And therefore,
4 there are many other things going on. Our friend
5 Rabbi Ranumal (phonetic) is here. We work very
6 closely. We had an inter-faith prayer service in his
7 temple. So it's our pleasure to really participate in
8 this. Thank you very much.

9 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you. Thank you.

10 (Applause)

11 MR. CYRUS: My name is Johanir (phonetic)
12 Cyrus. I'm originally a native of Persia, born in
13 Iran. I have a couple of comments, quick comments and
14 could be also in the form of a question to the panel.
15 I think there were a few times that the question was
16 raised by statements made by several people whether
17 we're going to make it. I came with the expectation
18 to this meeting today that we are going to make it.
19 We will have to make it. The question is whether this
20 generation or we're going to have to pass on the
21 responsibility to the next.

22 Sister's comments were very refreshing
23 because in early '80s and late '70s I, as a Baha'i,
24 found myself in a very odd situation, defending the

1 Islam and its teachings while my brothers and my
2 relatives were being slaughtered in the land of their
3 birth, Persia, in the name of Islam.

4 My question to the panel is: How could we
5 as leaders or servants of different religions come
6 together, speak about unity, without regarding the
7 founders of these religions as educators in one divine
8 curriculum and agents in one divine court? I was
9 also very encouraged and stimulated by your
10 presentation, Doctor Eck. I find examples of violence
11 that you cited has really counted for the people to
12 come together. What really I feel that has kept us
13 Farsis together is the spirit of apathy to
14 indifference and denial. How could we address that?

15 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you very, very much.

16 (Applause)

17 DOCTOR ECK: Doctor Henderson.

18 DOCTOR HENDERSON: I want to make one
19 comment about this. I have particularly emphasized
20 the development of models of race unity but I want to
21 make a comment on the other side because you pointed
22 out the need for that. I come from the area of
23 Chicago which is one of the great metropolitan cities
24 anywhere in the world but right in the middle of

1 Chicago are 500,000 school kids, 85 percent of whom
2 are black, 85 percent of whom are impoverished and 70
3 percent of the children entering the Chicago school
4 system at the kindergarten age do not know their last
5 name.

6 They are being failed in every way and one
7 of the aspects of the failure is the disintegration of
8 faith communities and their inability to reach out and
9 provide the kinds of support, encouragement, moral and
10 spiritual vision and practical assistance that a faith
11 community is intended to provide. I think that Doctor
12 Sharif's point is very valid. No matter what faith we
13 are from, this is an emergency call to people who
14 believe in anything constructive because we face a
15 challenge which is at the core and the heart of our
16 nation which will undermine the nation itself. Make
17 no mistake. It is a threat to the internal order and
18 national security of the nation. We have tremendous
19 potential, but we also have tremendous problems that
20 require a unified action by all of us.

21 (Applause)

22 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you. Thank you very
23 much.

24 Doctor Bhatnagar would like a moment of

1 response on this as well.

2 DOCTOR BHATNAGAR: No. I thank you. I
3 just want to invite two people who are in the audience
4 here. One is Janet Irvin. She's the Director of
5 Inter-faith (unintelligible) to comment on the
6 organization and Helen Lang who is the Executive
7 Director of the Asian Institute If you so kindly would
8 like to comment. Thank you.

9 DOCTOR ECK: You're being called to the
10 line. I would like to say just one other thing in
11 response to the previous speaker, as well. Something
12 that we must remember and that is that all over the
13 world the issue of whether or not we can sustain
14 multi-religious society is being challenged and we see
15 disintegration of many formerly multi-religious
16 societies, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, etcetera, long lines
17 of religious, ethnic, cultural conflict. And we have
18 to be clear that we're not living in some sort of
19 isolation in the United States. We do have people
20 from both India and Pakistan, people from both Iran
21 and Baha'i.

22 Our question is: Are we going to
23 recapitulate the strife of the rest of the world
24 within our borders or are we going to create

1 something else? And I think the question that Johanir
2 (phonetic) Cyrus raised is one that really prompts us
3 to think about that in a very deep way.

4 MS. COBB: I'm Reba Cobb and I'm the new
5 Executive Director for the Kentuckian Inter-Faith
6 Community. Thank you for mentioning us. We are a 20
7 year old, actually a 19 year old multi-faith agency
8 covering 10 counties, three in Indiana and seven in
9 Kentucky. So we are an old organization that I think
10 has helped historically to keep and move Louisville to
11 a good, unified inter-faith community, and we will
12 continue to work at that.

13 My question is this. I read your book,
14 Diana. Some people in the audience may not know that
15 you won the Gramer (phonetic) Award in Religion for
16 that book in 1993.

17 DOCTOR ECK: '93, '95. I forget.

18 MS. COBB: It's a good book. I recommend
19 it. I was on the committee that read the book and
20 recommended you. I very much enjoyed your book.

21 But here's my question. In it you talk
22 about pluralism and you talked about pluralism today
23 and I understand the difference in the two words
24 diversity and pluralism. But there is a huge fear

1 with people when we use the word pluralism. I have
2 seen it, so I've stopped using it because people are
3 frightened of it. Do you have a third word? Is there
4 someone who can come up with a new way to say it
5 because I understand diversity isn't totally correct
6 but pluralism is frightening and it's the fear of not
7 knowing.

8 DOCTOR ECK: I think there is some sense,
9 and you can't sort of go around saying, well, this is
10 what pluralism is all the time. Pluralism is not
11 relativism. Doesn't mean you have to water down what
12 you believe. It's really the engagement of our
13 differences that pluralism isn't just wishy-washy
14 tolerance, believe anything you want, but really begin
15 to know something about these differences.

16 The problem is I think you're right.
17 People are uncertain about this word pluralism. So if
18 anyone has some suggestions to Rita's question, I'd
19 like to hear them, too. What is that word that
20 describes this one America that is not just the
21 islands of difference with no connection with one
22 another but the engagement of our differences in
23 common purpose? I call that pluralism in the most
24 positive sense of the word. But we may need some

1 language that describes this in a way that enables
2 people to hear it. Thank you.

3 MS. COBB: It's a dirty word. It's not a
4 good word, so we need help. Thank you.

5 DOCTOR ECK: Thank you.

6 DAN ENGLAND: ...in Charles Town, West
7 Virginia, and kind of a transplant from Atlanta,
8 Georgia, into the Appalachian community. And in that
9 context, I raise two questions. One to Doctor
10 Anderson -- I mean, Doctor Henderson. You mention
11 management systems, or management systems were
12 mentioned in the context of presenting you and the
13 kind of work that you have done into the high faith
14 community. Charles Town is kind of a unique situation
15 now, as well as West Virginia, because of a Toyota
16 plant that comes into Putnam county, and the
17 difficulty in bridging that cultural gap. The
18 Appalachian context it seemed to me to be a very
19 unique kind of situation to talk about race
20 initiatives because often --

21 Now, here's the notion that the
22 Appalachian hegemony would prevent one from being
23 concerned about the arrival of other cultures. In
24 West Virginia, it's less than 10 percent black and

1 when you get down to the "other," that usually
2 includes Muslims, Hindu, and Asian-Americans. So, how
3 do we initiate the context of a conversation in an
4 Appalachian context that is usually so regarded as
5 such a minority.

6 The second question, I wondered whether
7 the presence of intolerance in culture differences is
8 arrived because of our phobia about other persons, or
9 because of transferred aggression in terms of what
10 happens on the global front in other communities that
11 we see are the conflicts and then persons of that
12 religious or ethnic origin that happen to be present
13 in a given community becomes targets of that
14 aggression?

15 MS. OCHI: There's no question that that's
16 the case. Let's just start with that because I know
17 that Sister Assilmi has had that experience as well.
18 That people, our neighbors, so to speak, come to
19 represent global forces that we are afraid of.

20 MS. ASSILMI: And that is an absolute
21 fact. But it's more so right now, apparent among
22 those of us who are practicing Islam because we are
23 held responsible no matter what our cultural
24 background may be. We are held responsible for

1 anything that is done by any Muslim anywhere in the
2 world. And, when people say that things are done in
3 the name of Islam, or that -- sometimes it really
4 tears me up because people have always claimed to do
5 things in the name of their religion. The crusades
6 and the atrocities that were done during the time of
7 the crusades by the crusaders themselves, and they did
8 this in the name of Christianity, yet that's rarely
9 mentioned. And when it is, it's down played
10 enormously.

11 And yet, when it's a Muslim, you know that
12 this is Islam because it says so. You see in the
13 newspaper any time a Muslim does anything wrong,
14 you're going to know that it was a Muslim that did it
15 because they always identify when we are Muslims. And
16 yet, anyone else is never identified by their
17 religion.

18 They didn't say the religion of Jeffrey
19 Dahmer. They didn't identify what religion he was.
20 I mean, just look at what happened in Oklahoma City.
21 Right? First they claimed it was the Muslims who did
22 it. It was terrifying for me. I was in Oklahoma City
23 at the time. I was horrified. I was terrified. I
24 was scared to death. My son was afraid. My father

1 had just died and we went to bury him because I'm
2 originally from Oklahoma and we happened to be there
3 at the time of the bombing. And it was Muslims. They
4 were looking for the Muslims. And my son was so
5 scared that he almost asked me to take my scarf off.
6 He said, I'm afraid and I said do you want me to take
7 it off? And he says, I do but I don't. I want you to
8 do what's right but I'm afraid if they see us, they're
9 going to pull us out and put us in jail.

10 And yet, Timothy McVeigh's religion was
11 never identified. They never said what religion he
12 was.

13 Things like this help to instill fear of
14 all Muslims. I believe the media should be asked to
15 either identify the religion of every person they
16 speak of or do not identify the religion of any of
17 them. And that would do a great deal towards making
18 it possible for us not to fear each other.

19 MS. OCHI: Thank you very much.

20 Doctor Henderson, just a moment of
21 response and then we're going to get on to our line.

22 DOCTOR HENDERSON: Yes. I really
23 appreciate your comments, Sister, and I think that
24 that problem is typical of the designation of all

1 minorities.

2 I want to express special appreciation to
3 the question that was asked with regard to our
4 relationship to social and economic development.
5 Because a great deal of work is being done now which
6 indicates that trust and the development of social
7 virtue is critical to both social cohesion and the
8 development of economic prosperity. And that as we go
9 into the future, the widespread availability of
10 knowledge, universally available, will be the engine
11 that drives social and economic development but only
12 to the extent that communities and organizations are
13 able to build trust and those other principles and
14 spiritual characteristics. So much so that in a book
15 by that name, Trust: Social Virtue and the Creation
16 of Economic Prosperity, written by a man named Francis
17 Fukuyama, the very last chapter is a call for the need
18 for the spiritualization of economic life. Because of
19 a growing recognition that these elements are not
20 disconnected. They are all organically interwoven
21 elements of our lives.

22 So, when we think about our spiritual
23 missions, we don't -- we can't think about them as
24 disconnected from the development of the society and

1 the development of the society's economy.

2 MS. OCHI: Thank you very much.

3 I'm very aware of our time here and I'd
4 like to have each of the persons standing in line
5 identify yourself briefly, say what's on your mind,
6 also briefly, and we're just going to move through the
7 line rather than have any response.

8 MS. RAMSEY: My name is Jenny Ramsey and
9 I'm here from Lexington representing the Kentucky
10 Council of Churches. But what I wish to speak about
11 is something that I have experienced that is great
12 hope, great hope for One America.

13 It's happening in Louisville. It's
14 happening all over Kentucky. But in Lexington, I've
15 been fortunate enough to be the chair of a task force
16 for the faith communities of Lexington to come
17 together to address welfare reform.

18 We've had 237 churches in faith
19 communities, as we say, from the Bajas who have joined
20 our table. There is an effort across Kentucky right
21 now to bring together the faith communities to make a
22 difference in the welfare to work particularly in
23 family mentoring. It's happening and I wish to
24 suggest a name, a word, to replace pluralism. Let's

1 call it community. Because that's what we're seeing
2 happening.

3 MS. OCHI: That's great. Thank you.
4 Thank you, Jenny.

5 On to the next.

6 Write that one up, too. That's good.

7 REVEREND CARTWRIGHT-TIGHE: I'm Reverend
8 Ashley Cartwright-Tighe. I'm with the Christian
9 Church Disciples of Christ. I'm a pastor here in
10 Louisville.

11 And I got to thinking as I heard about all
12 the different initiatives on race that have taken
13 place in the last year about where the children fit
14 in. And I began to think, wouldn't it be wonderful,
15 and I just want to know, is there anything being
16 planned within this concept with relation to children
17 talking with each other dealing with the trust issue
18 and other things?

19 MS. OCHI: Thank you. That's a great
20 question. We'll pass that on to the organizers here
21 as I think they should hear that.

22 MR. BROCKWELL: My name is Charles
23 Brockwell. I'm the pastor of the Fourth Avenue United
24 Methodist Church, three blocks down the way here. And

1 we house the KIC.

2 I moved back into parish ministry last
3 year after 28 years in higher education because of a
4 deep concern about the American city. I think our
5 civilization is at threat -- is at risk from what's
6 happening in our cities. And that we must have
7 communities of grace and reconciliation in the cities.

8 And, Doctor Henderson, you were speaking
9 about the faith communities being active in what we
10 call urban ministry. And the question that comes to
11 my mind, and the one I was going to ask you to respond
12 to but I assume we can't have time for that now, to
13 have faith communities, those communities have to have
14 persons of faith commitment. And so, my question is
15 how can we, all of us, make our appeals to persons
16 from our particular faith perspective?

17 I mean, when I call people to something,
18 I call them to a particular thing that has common
19 ground with others but is still different. How can we
20 do that work so that we do have faith communities that
21 can be active and still not have a war?

22 MS. OCHI: This is really the \$60,000.00
23 question. Very big question.

24 Yes?

1 REVEREND HOPKINS: I'm Dan Hopkins with
2 the Fiscal Diocese of Colorado, for years served as
3 the social justice officer in Colorado with the
4 Episcopal Church. And ran several dialogues over a
5 few years on race and inter-faith relationship, and
6 found in my discussions there many different things
7 that were happening that were very positive, and
8 continue to happen. But for the last six years, I've
9 worked in the area of disability. And worked with
10 churches, states, non-profits, and with for-profit
11 corporations in ways to utilize, and involve, include
12 people with disabilities.

13 I just want to get early on the agenda,
14 since we're going to be talking about things that work
15 and don't work, the issue of disability and
16 involvement in religious communities. There are 54
17 million people in this country with disabilities.
18 Early research says that 80 to 90 percent of them do
19 not -- are not involved in any religious community.
20 Eighty to 90 percent.

21 The issue came up on economic development.
22 Eighty-three percent of African-Americans with
23 disabilities aren't involved. Seventy-eight percent
24 of Latinos. And Native Americans are off the scale.

1 So, when we talk about inclusion, I just want to give
2 a perspective. There are 20 million more people with
3 disabilities than there are African-Americans in this
4 country. So, when we talk about 80 to 90 percent,
5 we're talking about, relatively speaking, no African-
6 Americans being in any religious community anywhere in
7 this country, to help to give you perspective.

8 So, clearly, that needs to be part of the
9 dialogue with poverty, exclusion, are so -- it is
10 strictly tied to disability. When you deal with, I
11 don't know what the issue is, but basically 54 million
12 is one-sixth of the population of this country. I
13 think that most of us know that one-sixth of the
14 population, clergy in this country, are not people
15 with disabilities. And that generally speaking we ask
16 people with disabilities to retire if they acquire a
17 disability if they are clergymen. So, it's very
18 important that we begin to add that to our discussion.

19 Churches were exempt from the Americans
20 with Disabilities Act. The assumption was that their
21 ethics and morality would lead them to making the
22 adjustments that included people. It hasn't happened
23 and it's not on the drawing board in most places. So,
24 I really just thought I'd -- you can tell by the lack

1 of Braille bulletins, large print, hearing devices,
2 and ramps in churches, or synagogues, or other
3 religious edifices. So, I would simply say if we can
4 keep that as part of this agenda today, it impacts a
5 huge part of our population.

6 MS. OCHI: Thank you, Reverend Hopkins.

7 (Whereupon, applause.)

8 MS. ERWIN: I'm Janet Erwin with
9 Interfaith Pastor Peace. I thank Doctor Bhatnagar for
10 making me come up here and put in a plug for our
11 organization.

12 We've been struggling for almost two years
13 to get people to know that we exist. But, we have had
14 some successes as Doctor Bhatnagar has said, with our
15 interfaith Memorial Day service and we're also
16 peripherally involved in a service that Rabbi Miles
17 and Doctor Sharif have had the last two years that has
18 to do with an interfaith Thanksgiving service which is
19 extremely moving also.

20 Our big thrust really has been to try to
21 get people to come together in small groups, six or
22 eight people, to sit around and share a meal and just
23 talk about their faith. Which I think is just an
24 extremely important thing for us to do. Reba Cobb and

1 I just said to each other as we passed in the aisle,
2 we have gotten our mandate. We are going to work very
3 hard to try to take care of some of the things that
4 you all have said.

5 Thank you very much for your inspiration.

6 MS. OCHI: Thank you.

7 MS. LANG: I'm Helen Lang with the Asia
8 Institute which is an Asian cultural center here based
9 in Louisville and we have been in existence for 11
10 years.

11 I want you all to know that it has been an
12 uphill battle all those years but you have to hang in
13 there. And at the beginning, we started as just a
14 Chinese institute to teach Chinese culture to school
15 children and to other groups that were interested.
16 But two years ago we realized that in this global
17 society, we must become more inclusive so we included
18 the rest of the Asian countries. And we don't claim
19 to be experts but we seek out to other members in the
20 community and outside who are from other Asian
21 countries such as Doctor Bhatnagar and Mrs. Bhatnagar
22 here and others who are represented here of other
23 Asian nationalities. And it is important that we give
24 that kind of exposure to the grassroots, namely our

1 children. They are our future leaders. And we want
2 them to know, like you have, some of you have
3 mentioned, that this is the human race. And that we
4 are all for world peace, and it's always been a
5 constant with me, as well as social justice.

6 So, I want you all to be aware that there
7 is such an organization here. We're not affiliated
8 with any religious groups but those who come, all have
9 faith. And that's the most important thing.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. OCHI: Thank you.

12 DOCTOR BHATNAGAR: Thank you. That was
13 very well said.

14 MR. LOGAN: My name is Ron Logan and
15 perhaps I'm of -- I represent no organization of
16 social significance. I'm a pastor of the Mere
17 Memorial Baptist Church here in Louisville. And I
18 come here with no new vision but to rekindle an old
19 one.

20 There was a gentleman by the name of
21 Doctor Samuel Proctor that wrote a book, My Moral
22 Odyssey. And as we hear the concerns here, we are
23 reminded of the fear that we have with freedom of
24 choice. And so, we would suggest to this initiative

1 to revisit that old vision. Certainly we must learn
2 to embrace individuality and freedom of choice as well
3 as we must be responsible for those choices.

4 So, we want to thank you and ask you,
5 Samuel Proctor, My Moral Odyssey.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. OCHI: Thank you very much.

8 Two more.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good morning. Giving
10 honor to God. Just glad that you panelists and
11 President's Initiative on Race, One America, is here.
12 I don't know whether you feel the pain that we feel in
13 Louisville, Kentucky and the State of Kentucky. It's
14 painful, very painful to sit and listen. And listen
15 to people talk about faith. Somewhere I read in the
16 Bible faith without works is dead.

17 And I just encourage and challenge you
18 when you leave this room, to go to the Hall of Justice
19 and you'll see a disproportionate people color going
20 through the court system without any rehabilitation.
21 Go to the construction sites not only in Louisville
22 but all over the State of Kentucky and you'll see four
23 percent, sometimes less than that, people of color,
24 women in the work force. And you're qualified. Go to

1 every school district in the State of Kentucky, 176
2 school districts and zero African-Americans as
3 superintendents. It's painful, very painful.

4 And, we wrote a document and left the
5 document with you. I'm not going to go through it,
6 but hopefully it will get to the White House. When we
7 talk about one America, there's an economic part of
8 this that needs to be dealt with. And in Louisville
9 and the State of Kentucky, African-Americans, people
10 of color, and many times women, are not a part of the
11 economic mix. And it's by design. And we need
12 President Clinton and initiatives like this to not
13 only have discussions but if you go out in the
14 communities before you have the discussions, then you
15 will see the pain. You will feel the pain. For the
16 first time, Sister, I felt somebody who felt like me.
17 And whenever something negative is done in the
18 community, I say, my God, I hope it's not an African-
19 American. I feel your pain. I identify with your
20 pain. Because we, as African-Americans, feel the same
21 way.

22 Brother Henderson, we need some of those
23 initiatives that you're working on in California to
24 eliminate the drugs in our community. Because when

1 they go through our courts, our young men and young
2 women go through our court system, there is no
3 rehabilitation at all. It seems as though there's a
4 design pattern to house as many people of color in
5 jail to get them off the street and keep them off the
6 street.

7 My brother from the University of
8 Louisville, I understand you saying things are looking
9 good, but I'm feeling the pain every day. Things are
10 not looking so good. And I hope this is not only a
11 dialogue but I hope there is some action that will
12 take place from workshops and meetings like this all
13 over the city that before you start with the dialogue,
14 go out in the community and see the pain that the
15 folks are going through. And then you can really dig
16 in and say here are some alternatives that can make
17 this thing work. Because we are not one America. One
18 white. One black. One white. One people of color.
19 One poor and one wealthy. We are not one America.
20 And we can be one, thought, because it's going to take
21 groups like yours. It's going to take a president of
22 the United States to say I'm sick and tired of being
23 sick and tired of this type of mess going on.

24 God bless you and thank you for coming.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. OCHI: Thank you.

3 One more.

4 MS. SCHERD: My name is Profula Scherd
5 (phonetic) and I'm a vertically challenged person. So
6 I always have problems, either tippie toe or --

7 I'd like you to -- I work on a college
8 campus and when you say the word religion, it makes a
9 lot of people want to walk away because separation of
10 church and state.

11 I hope at the end today's discussion you
12 will come up with a group of guidelines that we can
13 live in a spiritual sense. To me, religion is the
14 basis, the parameters. Spirituality is how I live my
15 day-to-day life. One day a week, whether you are
16 Hindu, or Jain, or Christian, or Muslim, or Bahrain,
17 we gather with our religious communities to get those
18 guidelines. What I do the other six days of the week
19 is what my role is in making humanity better.

20 And folks who are in higher education or
21 school systems can go back and take those things for
22 six days a week, and apply those toward day-to-day
23 living, not one day a week when we all go together and
24 agree. Because, if we get together, we are going to

1 agree.

2 So, I hope you will come up, or you as a
3 group of us here, come up with guidelines that we say
4 this is what we're going to do for the rest of the six
5 days of the week, not just one day a week.

6 MS. OCHI: Thank you very much.

7 I'd like to thank all of our panelists
8 this morning and I'd like to thank the President's
9 Initiative on Race for bringing us together in this
10 place so that this kind of community discussion can be
11 repeated time and time and time again.

12 If it's true what we have heard, that
13 individuals, whether individual Muslims or individual
14 African-Americans somehow become representative of the
15 whole population in a difficult sense, it's also true
16 that because of the new multi-religious nation of the
17 United States, individuals can also be the starting
18 point for a much more positive dialogue. And as we've
19 seen this morning, in the faces of individual
20 neighbors, not neighbors in some other part of the
21 world but next door neighbors right here, we begin
22 both to see the pain and to see the hope. And
23 hopefully to begin wearing down the path of hope as
24 our invocation this morning asked us to do.

1 Thank you so very, very much.

2 DOCTOR COOK: Won't you join me in
3 thanking Diana Eck and all of our panelists this
4 morning.

5 We appreciate all of your contributions so
6 much. And I think we're on the right point in terms
7 of what we've looked at. We've seen some hope around
8 America. What we've called promising practices. And
9 we know around this country, especially in the
10 religious community, that there are many ongoing
11 efforts that are designed to bridge racial divisions.
12 And so, we need to capture some ideas and some lessons
13 that have been learned from all of these efforts so
14 that others can adapt themselves to their own
15 circumstances. And we also need to know that people
16 everywhere have a voice. That they're not just voices
17 in the wilderness, but they're part of a larger
18 America, a body of Americans who are committed to
19 bringing us closer together.

20 And so, one of the initiative's top
21 priorities has been to identify and shine a spotlight
22 on what we call promising practices. These are
23 community based and national efforts which have been
24 designed to promote racial reconciliation and increase

1 positive dialogue and expand opportunities for every
2 American.

3 To date, we have a web site and on our web
4 site we posted 150 unique promising practices. And
5 our goal is to include 500. We've heard from many
6 people across the country by correspondence of our web
7 site and we want to hear from you as well. There have
8 been some examples of some things that have happened.
9 For example, in Akron, Pennsylvania, what's call the
10 RAP program, Racial Awareness Program, has created a
11 network of Mennonite and Brethren individuals and
12 churches around the country who are committed to
13 ending racism in their community. And they provide
14 anti-racism training, education, resource development,
15 and consultations to Mennonite and Brethren in
16 churches around the country.

17 In Baltimore, Maryland, the Interfaith
18 Action for Racial Justice which was established by 110
19 different organizations, they're now in the midst of
20 a five year initiative to increase inter-racial and
21 inter-religious understanding in the Baltimore
22 metropolitan area.

23 In my own state of New York, in New
24 Rochelle, the Coalition for Mutual Respect, created by

1 both a rabbi and an AME, African Methodist Episcopal
2 minister, strengthen the communication between blacks
3 and Jews by sponsoring inter-racial affairs, picnics,
4 theater parties, pulpit exchanges.

5 And so, we also want to shine a light on
6 promising practices that you may be aware of or that
7 you are doing. We'll include them in our compendium.
8 In your packets, there is a form that says promising
9 practices. And we ask that you might take that out
10 now and just for the next three to four minutes if you
11 will fill that out. And our staff person, Anna Lopez
12 is here who will receive that just before our speaker
13 for the day.

14 So, if you will take the time to do that.
15 It will also give you a chance to get a little seventh
16 inning stretch. I'm from the Yankees, they had a
17 seventh inning stretch yesterday, the former World
18 Series Yankees. I'm from New York. Yes. So, every
19 now and then we know you need a break in the action.
20 So, if you'll take three or four minutes at this time,
21 we'll be happy to receive those. And Anna will
22 collect those in a few moments.

23 It's in your packet. It's called
24 Promising Practices. Attached is a three page

1 document. There's one sheet on that document that can
2 be filled out.

3 Anna, you have a sample that you could
4 hold up for them?

5 It's a stapled page in your packet and the
6 last, or second or third page, is the one to be filled
7 out.

8 This is Anna Lopez here. She will collect
9 them, if you'll just raise your hand when they're
10 done. We appreciate it. If you could just tear it
11 off and give them the page that you're filling out.
12 The other pages are for you.

13 Anna will continue. We'll give you
14 another minute or so and Anna will collect those. And
15 then we're going to introduce our speaker for our
16 morning. Would you pass it to either aisle, inside or
17 outside. Inside preferably, that would help in the
18 collection process, at this time. Pass it to the
19 inner aisle. That will help us tremendously. Thank
20 you.

21 Thank you for your time and for filling
22 out these forms for us. We appreciate them and you
23 always can fill it out if you want to think on it a
24 little further, and mail it in or fax it into the

1 office, which numbers are on your letterhead.

2 But if I could just have your attention,
3 we want to proceed with the morning and we thank you
4 for your attentiveness and for your patience. You've
5 been a wonderful audience and we appreciate it.

6 I saw the sign for Indiana, so we're
7 pretty close to Indiana from here? How many were
8 rooting for the Bulls, though, last night? And the
9 others from Indiana, how many were rooting for
10 Indiana? They did well. I was on the plane during
11 the whole game, so I just heard people cheering out in
12 the airport. The other people were cursing beside me,
13 but we made it. And we're glad to be here.

14 It is my pleasure and honor to present and
15 introduce to others our speakers for this morning's
16 session, for our second of our religious forums for
17 the President's Initiative on Race.

18 I met Doctor Anthony Campolo several years
19 ago but we've had for the last several holiday seasons
20 an opportunity to share together our families. He and
21 his wife, Peggy. They reside in St. Davids,
22 Pennsylvania, having two grown children. Last year,
23 with those of you who watched the President's
24 inauguration and saw the inter-faith service, may have

1 seen him as he spoke with such eloquence there from
2 the Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C. But
3 for years I have followed him and he's been like an
4 engine that's gaining steam.

5 He's a professor of sociology at the
6 Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania and he's
7 the founder and president of the Evangelical
8 Association for the Promotion of Education which is an
9 organization which is involved in educational,
10 medical, and economic development programs in various
11 third world countries which include Haiti and the
12 Dominican Republic. The organization also has done
13 extensive work among at risk young people in urban
14 America.

15 His extensive speaking schedule allows him
16 to be in demand across the nation as well as
17 internationally. A best selling author, he has 26
18 books presently in print; a weekly television program,
19 Hashing It Out that's carried by cable TV and is now
20 in 28 million homes. He's also an associate pastor of
21 the Mount Carmel Baptist Church in West Philadelphia
22 as well as serving as an associate for the
23 International Ministries of the American Baptist
24 Churches.

1 I am so glad to present him today. He is
2 insightful. He is delightful. He's exciting. He's
3 igniting. I hope you won't be disappointed because he
4 is anointed. Doctor Anthony Campolo.

5 Let's receive him.

6 REVEREND CAMPOLO: After that introduction
7 I can hardly wait to hear what I have to say.

8 Religion is both a positive and a negative
9 force in this whole racial struggle. We can see the
10 positive sides and the negative sides. The positive
11 sides are obvious. As we declare a God who calls us
12 to be family and most religious traditions, certainly
13 my own, would say that there is no Jew nor Greek,
14 bonded nor free, civil nor barbarian, male nor female.
15 Everyone becomes one. That oneness of humanity that
16 faith is supposed to engender is a very positive thing
17 that we see.

18 We also have to look at the negative side.
19 Here we have to go deeper because it would be useful
20 for us to look at somebody like Emil Dirckheim who
21 analyzing religion sees it as an instrument for
22 dividing people. In analyzing a group of Aboriginal
23 people in the interior of Australia, he noticed that
24 they were developing a set of traits and values that

1 made them quite distinct. Obviously, different groups
2 of people have cultural characteristics that make them
3 quite distinct from each other.

4 Secondly, little by little people in these
5 tribal units in the interior of Australia came up with
6 animals to symbolize the traits and values of their
7 respective tribes. Such animals are called totems.

8 The third stage was most intriguing.
9 Little by little they began to worship the animals but
10 now Durkheim is ready to raise the question. If
11 people end up worshipping deities, which are nothing
12 more than symbolic representations of their own traits
13 and values, when they worship those deities, what are
14 they really worshipping? Themselves. And so it is,
15 according to Durkheim, a great probability and
16 possibility that a given group will construct a God
17 that is nothing more than a projection of its own
18 collective traits and values.

19 In reality we run into a situation that
20 George Bernard Shaw described with eloquence. He said
21 God created us in his own image and we decided to
22 return the favor. Indeed that's true. I remember in
23 my church when I walked into my Sunday School class
24 one day and saw that the picture of Jesus that had

1 always been there had been removed. I belong to an
2 African-American church and the picture was gone and
3 somebody had put another picture of Jesus in its
4 place. This new Jesus was black. I said, "Who put
5 that there?" This young man who had this Afro - you
6 remember the Afros - this one took up the whole room.
7 He had beads, he had shades. He was very intimidating
8 and he said, "I did, baby." I said, "He wasn't
9 black." He said, "No, and he wasn't white either."
10 He did not like me transforming God into an image that
11 was different than he was and, vice versa, I didn't
12 like what he did.

13 There's a Chinese Catholic church in West
14 Philadelphia. If you go into the church there's a
15 stained glass image of Jesus and you can imagine what
16 Jesus is in this Chinese Catholic church. He's
17 Chinese. It kind of blows your mind when you stop to
18 think about it, but we have this tendency of creating
19 a God in the image of our own groups and this is a
20 very serious mess because then anybody that is not
21 part of our group is somehow second rate spiritually
22 and does not belong to the family of God.

23 What's more is religion at this point can
24 become an instrument of oppression. For instance, if

1 a group of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants create a
2 White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Jesus or God, depending
3 on where your theological construct is, then to go
4 around and propagate that God to be missionaries that
5 declare that God to other groups of people and call
6 upon other groups of people to worship that God has a
7 subtlety to it. People end up worshipping the God of
8 their oppressors and, indeed, around the world people
9 have raised this question.

10 We send missionaries to places like Africa
11 and we get them to worship a Jesus which is nothing
12 more than an incarnation of the White Anglo-Saxon
13 Protestant culture, an incarnation of all the things
14 that we're about. If we can get people to worship
15 such a deity, what we really do is have them
16 worshipping not God but worshipping us. This, of
17 course, becomes a socially and psychologically
18 oppressing thing.

19 So it is that religion insofar as it
20 propagates deities that are incarnations of particular
21 ethnic groups and call others to worship such deities
22 are, in reality, using religion as an instrument of
23 division, an instrument of oppression, an instrument
24 where, in fact, racial disintegration is inevitable.

1 So we have to be careful, those of us who are in
2 communities of faith, to ask a very simple question:
3 When we preach our messages, when we declare our
4 respective ideas of what God is like, are we, in fact,
5 proclaiming a God that comes out of scripture or are
6 we proclaiming a God that comes out of culture?
7 Because there's a vague difference between the two.

8 So I have to at first warn all of us about
9 the problems that are connected with such an idea
10 because once you have made God in your own image, then
11 you have no problems. You can go to war and you know
12 that God is on your side. Why shouldn't God be on
13 your side? God is one of you. You have made him into
14 an expression of what you yourself are. You have
15 deified your ethnic cultural traits and in so doing
16 have, in fact, denigrated everybody else's social and
17 cultural traits.

18 That kind of thing has got to stop. It
19 means that theologians have got to go deeper in their
20 understanding about God and the nature of God and how
21 God functions in the world in which we live. We need
22 a God who calls us together as one people, not a God
23 that is an expression of cultural, social, ethnic
24 individualities.

1 Religion can be an instrument for social
2 change and, indeed, it is. One of the reasons why I
3 think it's so important to deal with religion in the
4 context of race is because we cannot solve the race
5 problem without a change of consciousness or, as we
6 Baptists say, conversion.

7 I'm Baptist. People sometimes ask what is
8 the difference between a Baptist and a terrorist. The
9 answer is you can negotiate with a terrorist. I say
10 that only jokingly because I find some of the most --
11 you're just getting that, aren't you? I find some of
12 the most positive and some of the most negative things
13 are happening within my own Baptist community. We
14 must recognize that you cannot deal as was suggested
15 in the questioning time with racial discrimination
16 without dealing with all forms of discrimination
17 simultaneously, which means that the church has got to
18 come to grips with all kinds of discrimination whether
19 it's discrimination against women, whether it's
20 discrimination against given racial groups.

21 What is particularly upsetting these days,
22 if we're going to deal with this issue, we all have to
23 deal with the issue against certain sexual groups, not
24 just women. What about the discrimination against the

1 gay communities? The minute we begin to use religion
2 as an instrument of discrimination and oppression, and
3 I know what we all want to say. We all want to say,
4 "Oh, it's all right but don't you understand those
5 people don't fall into the category of the household
6 of God. I contend we all fall in the household of the
7 community of God and we need to, in fact, declare that
8 loud and clear.

9 What can the church do? The church, first
10 of all, must recognize what was stated so well in the
11 discussion time. The church must enter into economic
12 concerns. I mean, C. S. Lewis once said that we must
13 recognize that God is too great to be interested in
14 religion alone. The economic factors are there.

15 I'm from the city of Philadelphia. We
16 have horrendous levels of unemployment, especially
17 among African-American males. Now, these are people
18 that don't get counted because they never appear on
19 the welfare rolls. They have never applied for
20 welfare. They hang out on street corners and they are
21 survival people. What are we going to do?

22 One constructive idea is very simple.
23 Inner-city churches, particularly in ethnic
24 communities that are suffering from high levels of

1 unemployment need to become incubators for micro
2 businesses and micro industries. In Camden, New
3 Jersey, for instance, we have a program wherein we
4 have started some small businesses in the church.

5 Most church buildings, I hate to say it,
6 are a waste of property. They sit there from Sunday
7 to Sunday in needy neighborhoods closed up. A
8 building like that can house three, four, five small
9 micro industries; a moving company, a T-shirt factory,
10 a printing company, a company that recharges laser
11 printer cartridges, a company that rebuilds generators
12 and alternators for automobiles. Low tech, low skill
13 industries that can produce incredible profits for the
14 participants.

15 There's no reason why churches cannot do
16 that, especially in a place like Louisville. You have
17 a lot of churches here that are held together by
18 members that no longer live in the community that
19 drive in from the suburbs. Let me just say before you
20 want to drive those people out, ask yourself this
21 question: What skills do they have? In all
22 probability you have accountants, you have lawyers,
23 you have people who have experience in sales.

24 The church not only has a building that

1 can be an incubator for economic development, but it's
2 got people in it who have skills and those skills can
3 be mobilized to provide consulting teams that will
4 enable these small micro businesses to get started.
5 People, there is no freedom if there is no economic
6 freedom.

7 And we've got to create jobs. The church
8 has room for these businesses. The church has people
9 who can serve as consultants for these people. The
10 church even has an office to service all these people
11 with telephones and duplicating machines. You can cut
12 the level of overhead dramatically. You say, "Why are
13 you saying this?" Because I don't think you can solve
14 the racial problem unless you address the economic
15 problems that are associated with racism in this
16 country.

17 Therefore, I call churches and mosques and
18 synagogues to seriously consider how they can mobilize
19 their buildings and their people. The problem is that
20 seminaries are too narrow. We teach them to do
21 everything in seminary but what they ought to be
22 taught. We come into the community and say, "We're
23 here in the name of God to listen to your problems.
24 What are your problems?" And the African-American

1 people in my neighborhood say, "I'll tell you what our
2 problem is. We need jobs." So we set up a counseling
3 center.

4 They come back the next year and we say,
5 "We're here to listen to your needs. What are your
6 needs? What are your problems?" "We need jobs." So
7 we set up a basketball league. And then we hook up
8 lights so they can play until 2:00 in the morning when
9 they ought to be in bed sleeping getting ready for
10 school the next day.

11 We come back and say, "What do you need?"
12 They say, "We need jobs." You know, they begin to get
13 the feeling that we're really not listening to them.
14 We in the religious community aren't listening to them
15 and we are afraid to get into job development because
16 preachers don't know how to do that and we're afraid
17 to relinquish our power to people in our congregations
18 who do know how to do that. We've got to get into
19 that mode of thinking.

20 There's another thing that we have to
21 recognize. It's about time that the churches across
22 this nation begin to treat their own people,
23 particularly African-American people, as they have
24 treated newly arrived immigrants. Nobody likes to

1 talk about that. Let me just point out that at the
2 end of the war in southeast Asia and the end of the
3 war in Vietnam hundreds of thousands of refugees from
4 Cambodia and Vietnam landed on the west coast of this
5 country. The Government did not know what to do with
6 them. They were stashed away in prison-like camps.
7 Somebody came up with the idea that we ought to call
8 upon the churches of the country to adopt these
9 families. All across America churches adopted
10 Cambodian and Vietnamese families. The problem
11 evaporated overnight.

12 Each of these churches taking in a family
13 in reality did what? Found jobs for the people,
14 integrated them into the schools, found them housing,
15 bought them furniture, and African-American people in
16 my community began to say, "What's going on here? Why
17 are the churches of this country willing to do for
18 newly arrived immigrants what they have been unwilling
19 to do for their own citizens for the last 200 years?"
20 That's a good question.

21 And so a group of us with Jim Wallace of
22 Sojourners Community, myself, Gene Rivers, a few
23 others, have gotten together and formed an
24 organization called the Call for Renewal. The Call

1 for Renewal has a very basic premise coming here.
2 We're not going to solve all the problems of the world
3 but we're going to say is it possible for us to take
4 10,000 ethnic people who are economically oppressed,
5 who are basically unemployed, who are about to be
6 pushed off of the welfare rolls, and are we willing to
7 get churches across this country to adopt those
8 families and to give them hope and to give them
9 sustenance and to help them to take their place in the
10 societal system at large.

11 There's one more thing that we're into.
12 We started a program which the president as given
13 great support to called Mission Year. What we're
14 doing right now is under the auspices of the National
15 Council of Churches, and this goes for any religious
16 group because the president has allowed 50,000 slots
17 for this particular initiative, we're doing the
18 following. Here it is: We're recruiting college and
19 university students from across the country to drop
20 out of school for a year.

21 It's a good thing to do because most of
22 them don't know why they're there. You know what I'm
23 talking about. Don't you? You ask them coming out of
24 high school, "What are you going to do? What are you

1 going to be?" What do they say? If they don't know
2 what they're going do and what they're going to be,
3 what do you do? You send them to college.

4 Four years later and \$50,000 poorer you
5 ask the same question. "You're graduating. What are
6 you going to do? What are you going to be?" What do
7 they say? Not if they go to a good college like
8 Eastern College. They don't say, "I don't know."
9 They say, "I'm keeping all of my options open." I ask
10 them, "If you had to take your final exam from last
11 semester, would you pass them?" The answers is
12 always, "I don't think so." Okay. So you forgot what
13 you learned. What did you do with your textbooks?
14 One standard answer, "I sold them." I say, "That's
15 great. You forgot what you learned and you sold your
16 textbooks." This is called higher education.

17 And so we think it is important for young
18 people either before college, after college but, best
19 of all, during college to take a year off and we're
20 putting together in teams of four and five and six.
21 We're only doing this in Philadelphia and Oakland,
22 California, attaching them to a church and this is
23 what they're doing. They're going around door to door
24 knocking on doors. People answer a very simple

1 question. "Don't get the wrong idea. We're not here
2 to drag you out to our church and try to lay a trip on
3 you. We're here for one reason. We want to pray
4 God's blessing on you and God's help for you and for
5 all the people that live in this house. Will you let
6 us do that? You don't have to invite us in. You can
7 do it right here on the steps."

8 Even agnostics are going to say, "Well, it
9 can't hurt."

10 "Let me ask the next question. Do you
11 have some special concerns that we need to call upon
12 the Lord?" It is incredible. They will open up.
13 "Yes, my husband is out of a job. My son is flunking
14 out of school. My daughter is pregnant. We don't
15 know where to turn. My other son's in jail. We don't
16 have any legal representation." Fine. We just pray
17 for them.

18 When we get back to the church at the end
19 of the day we sit there and go over the cards and say,
20 "Here's a man who needs a job. Now, isn't there a job
21 placement program in this city? Let's call them and
22 tell them to go to 220." They're not going to go to
23 the job placement center. Jesus never said they would
24 come. Jesus said what? You go. Go and visit. Knock

1 on the door, invite them, and bring them along.

2 "Here's the boy flunking out of school.
3 Can't we get him into that tutoring center over there
4 that the synagogue is running down the street? They
5 are running an after-school program. Shouldn't we get
6 the kid involved in that?"

7 We find that in most cities you don't have
8 to invent new programs. There's enough programs.
9 Nobody knows they exist. We need a generation of
10 young people that will go out and in the name of God
11 knock on doors, pray with people, hear the sufferings
12 of people. They will come back to school with a new
13 idea of what America is about and what its problems
14 are and what its needs are.

15 When the brother here said we suffer, we
16 hurt, I tell you what has to happen if the young men
17 and women who are privileged in educational
18 institutions need to go out there and experience that
19 hurt meeting people door to door, face to face. You
20 say what if they get doors slammed in their face?
21 Well, Jesus says in the 10th Chapter of Matthew when
22 that happens say, "You're in trouble, sucker." No, he
23 really doesn't say that. In the King James it says,
24 "It's more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for

1 you on the day of judgment."

2 If they don't know what to say when people
3 ask them serious questions, the Bible says don't
4 worry. The Spirit will put the words in your mouth.
5 I've had young people say to me, "You know, you're
6 right." People ask me a complex question and I didn't
7 know what to say and halfway through a stumbling
8 answer I thought to myself, "This is brilliant. I
9 think I'll write this down." The church has got to
10 mobilize its young people to go out and meet people in
11 the neighborhoods, pray with them, listen to them.
12 Let them lay a trip on them.

13 You say what do they do after they pray
14 for everybody in the neighborhood? You do it again
15 and again and again. I think the Mormons have got the
16 right idea but the question is this; if they can get
17 their kids to go out for two years, why can't we get
18 our kids to go out for one year to listen? Not to
19 talk, to listen, to learn, to pray with, to empathize
20 with people who are needy. I believe in conversion
21 but I believe the conversion is there.

22 The last thing I would say is we need to
23 recognize that the God that we have come to declare is
24 a God that does not reside in the sky somewhere. It

1 is said how can you love a God that you cannot see if
2 you do not love a neighbor that you can see? I don't
3 want to be nasty but in my Christian position I always
4 say to young people, "If you're a racist, you don't
5 have a social problem. You have a spiritual problem.
6 You're not a Christian." If any man says that he
7 loves God and doesn't love his brother, the Bible says
8 what? He's a liar. That's pretty nasty. Isn't it?
9 The Bible doesn't go easy on racists.

10 The serious thing that we have to
11 recognize is that whatever we deem to be sacred,
12 whether it's Allah, whether it's Yahweh, whether it's
13 Jesus, we have to recognize that whatever we deem to
14 be sacred is waiting to be encountered with people who
15 are in need and people who hurt.

16 I'm walking down Chester Street in
17 Philadelphia and this bum; dirty, filthy bum, soot
18 covering his body from head to toe, homeless man
19 dressed in a heavy coat sweating profusely, huge beard
20 with rotted food stuck in it, holding in his hand a
21 cup of coffee. He said, "Mister, you want some of my
22 coffee?" I said, "That's all right." He said, "No,
23 no, no." I realize turning them off is the wrong
24 thing. I said, "I'll take a sip." I took a sip of

1 the coffee and gave it back. I said, "You're getting
2 generous giving away your coffee. Aren't you?" He
3 said, "Well, when God gives you something good, you
4 ought to share it with people."

5 I didn't know what to say to I said, "Can
6 I give you something in return?" I figure he's going
7 to hit me for \$5.00. He said, "Yeah, you can give me
8 a hug." I was hoping for the \$5.00. He put his arms
9 around me and I put my arms around him and then I
10 realized something. He wasn't going to let me go.
11 People were passing looking at this established man
12 hugging this bum. I was embarrassed but little by
13 little my embarrassment shifted to awe and reverence.
14 I heard a voice echo down, "I was hungry. Did you
15 feed me? I was naked. Did you clothe me? I was
16 sick. Did you care for me? I was that bum you met on
17 the street. Did you hug me? If you failed to do it
18 undo the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you
19 failed to do it unto me."

20 Any religion that does not teach its
21 people to find the sacred, the ultimately sacred
22 coming sacramentally through those who one finds as
23 strangers, is failing. When white people find their
24 God coming to them through black people and black

1 people find their God coming to them through white
2 people, the end of rejection will begin because we'll
3 find it impossible to reject one another if we feel we
4 are rejecting ultimate reality when we do that.

5 I believe in St. Francis of Assisi who
6 said we must view one another in a sacramental manner.
7 When I say sacrament, all the Roman Catholics get
8 happy because in Holy Communion they believe the bread
9 becomes literally the flesh of Jesus and the wine
10 becomes the blood of Jesus and they take the elements.
11 Baptists, on the other hand, we believe in Holy
12 Communion the bread stays bread and the wine is
13 transformed into grape juice. That's the theology.
14 In the middle are Anglicans and Lutherans and they
15 believe that the bread remains bread and the wine
16 remains wine but a sacred presence -- a sacred
17 presence is here in us.

18 I don't know whether they're right or
19 wrong but I do know this. There's one thing Francis
20 says, that the discriminated against, the hurting, the
21 poor, the downtrodden must be viewed sacramentally,
22 what he is saying to us is that when we and people of
23 faith as men and women who declare the message of God
24 teach our people to seek the sacred waiting to be

1 encountered in others, this problem will begin to
2 disappear.

3 We helped create it with our totemism. We
4 had better participate in ending the problem or else
5 one day we shall be held accountable and we will not
6 be able to point to them and say, "They did it." The
7 response will be, "No, you did it and you did very
8 little to change the situation and change was needed."

9 Thank you.

10 REV. DR. COOK: You can say amen if you
11 want. At least it's a faith forum and we can say it.
12 Amen. Wow. What a word. Our breakout sessions are
13 in the afternoon and we were hoping the dialogue would
14 begin there but I'm sure at lunchtime there will be
15 some thoughts that have been provoked and that we will
16 share with each other. We've had our soul food
17 already though. Amen. Turn to somebody and tell
18 them, "That was a message." Now, I'm a Baptist
19 preacher. I got to hear a little something. Turn and
20 tell somebody, "That was a message." Turn to someone
21 else and slap them high five. All right. You all got
22 that down. Look a there. Yeah.

23 Thank you, Dr. Campolo. It was a
24 wonderful word. Thought provoking, inspirational,

1 insightful, deep. Deep. It was deep.

2 We are prepared to have lunch. Just
3 before we leave I wanted to share with you some
4 instructions. I thank all of our presenters this
5 morning. They have all been rich and all have
6 triggered us toward a new level and a deeper
7 understanding.

8 If you lost a set of keys with a Lincoln
9 key chain -- you'll take the Lincoln. You want the
10 Lincoln. The owner of the keys that has the Lincoln
11 medallion, if you can identify it, it will be at the
12 registration table. If you'll meet my brother here,
13 he will see you afterwards. Thank you.

14 Just in terms of our interest activity,
15 one thing, I know that it was the high Jewish holiday
16 and for some of our Jewish brothers and sisters could
17 not be here. We thank you for sharing that with us
18 and we will certainly take that into account. Thank
19 you very much.

20 Secondly, we are going to reconvene in 45
21 minutes. It is now 12:20. We ask you to please be
22 back at 1:10 back into the session. There will be box
23 lunches available right outside of this room. You can
24 eat and meet someone and greet someone and use the

1 entire area of the space that's behind us outside of
2 these doors. We hope that you will meet and greet
3 someone that you have not had a chance to speak with
4 before.

5 It's been a wonderful morning session.
6 Please bless the food in your own way, however you
7 choose to do that, and we will see you at 1:10. Thank
8 you very much.

9 (Whereupon, off the record for lunch at
10 12:20 p.m. to reconvene at 1:10 p.m.)

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1 A-F-T-E-R-N-O-O-N S-E-S-S-I-O-N

2 (1:10 p.m.)

3 DOCTOR COOK: President Clinton named Ms.
4 Ochi as the Director of the Community Relations
5 Service of the Department of Justice. Last year,
6 March 20th, 1997, she was unanimously confirmed by the
7 United States Senate and thereby becoming the first
8 Asian-American woman to serve at the Assistant
9 Attorney General level.

10 Let's give her a hand. I think that's a
11 wonderful accomplishment.

12 (Applause.)

13 DOCTOR COOK: And she's got extensive,
14 elaborative -- Extensive experience in building
15 collaborative efforts partnerships between multi-
16 racial communities, law enforcement, and government
17 agencies. And it makes her ideally suited to be not
18 only at the head of an agency whose mission is to do
19 that but also to be here with us today. I've had a
20 real pleasure of getting to know her. She has already
21 emerged as a key figure in the effort to elevate race
22 relations in America and to establish racial
23 reconciliation.

24 As one of thousands of Japanese Americans

1 unjustly interned during World War II, Ms. Ochi has a
2 deep commitment to equal justice which stems from her
3 own family's experience with racial discrimination.
4 She comes as one with experience and she comes as one
5 to moderate this afternoon's panel.

6 Won't you join me in welcoming Rose M.
7 Ochi.

8 MS. OCHI: Good afternoon. My minister
9 wouldn't accept that.

10 Good afternoon.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

12 MS. OCHI: I'm really pleased to join you
13 at this religious leaders forum. It's because through
14 gatherings such as this we can learn to find ways to
15 better work together in improving race relations in
16 America. I know that you're having a good forum.
17 I've gotten a chance to catch a little bit of this
18 morning. I'm having a great day although we had a
19 little bit of a bad start last night, stuck at the
20 airport.

21 This morning I was rushing, hoping to
22 catch a plane and an interesting thing occurred. As
23 I entered the airport, this man caught my eye and he
24 followed me. And he came rushing, and he kept

1 following me. And then he circled around me. And
2 then he stood in my path. And then he stuck his
3 finger in my face. And then he said, Connie Chung.

4 (Laughter.)

5 MS. OCHI: We all look alike.

6 I'm not Connie Chung. I'm Rose Ochi. And
7 I'm director of the federal government's race
8 relations arm. And I must tell you, our plate is very
9 full with our failures to come to grips with racial
10 intolerance and violence, and bigotry, and greed.

11 So, I am very happy to be able to moderate
12 this panel today, to explore ways in which we can
13 improve racial understanding and racial -- bring about
14 racial reconciliation. We're going to be looking at
15 what works.

16 In order to achieve the President's vision
17 of one America, he often talks about this is not
18 something we can mandate, legislate, or regulate.
19 That we need to reach the hearts and minds of the
20 American people. And that we need to enlist all
21 segments of the community, and particularly the
22 religious leadership.

23 For over 30 years, the Community Relations
24 Service has helped communities to resolve racial and

1 ethnic conflicts. And that we have worked hand and
2 glove with religious leaders across the United States
3 when peaceful relations were threatened. For example,
4 in the aftermath of church arsons, we've been in over
5 230 localities helping to restore calm and to bridge
6 the racial divide. One example of our work is we work
7 with black and white ministers in Rocky Mount, South
8 Carolina to find ways to deal with the polarization
9 that takes place after a fire. We also moved into
10 cities after hate crimes. An example is the brutal
11 assault on a 13-year old African-American youth in
12 Chicago by three white teenagers. We've been helping
13 the archdiocese in their eliminating racism program.

14 The religious community has historically
15 provided an instrumental role in improving race
16 relations. And it's true that we have come a long way
17 in the past several decades, but 30 years since the
18 passage of the Voting Rights Act, 40 years since Brown
19 versus Board of Education, racial prejudice and the
20 corrosive effect of discrimination are still with us.
21 In recent years, we have new targets, new victims.

22 This morning I heard individuals talk
23 about pain, the disparate of impact the criminal
24 justice system, about economic impoverishment, and the

1 lack of equal educational opportunities. So, while we
2 have made great strides, much remains to be done.

3 Our panel today is made up of experts who
4 are going to share their successes and our objective
5 here is to try to identify and extract out the
6 elements that made their success possible. Because
7 we're looking at how we can transfer and replicate
8 their successes in other communities.

9 Let me introduce the panelists. They will
10 all take three minutes to make a presentation and then
11 I will engage them in questions.

12 Our first panelist is Doctor T. Vaughn
13 Walker. Doctor Walker is pastor of the First
14 Gethsemane Baptist Church in Louisville for the past
15 15 years. He is a professor and department chair at
16 the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and holds a
17 Ph.D. in theology.

18 Beverly Watts is the executive director of
19 the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. She has been
20 cited in the Who's Who of Female Executives, Black
21 Americans, Outstanding Young Women in America and in
22 the South. Mrs. Watts has received numerous
23 leadership and civil rights awards.

24 Inez Torres Davis is an associate minister

1 at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America located
2 in Chicago. She was the first Hispanic rostered by
3 the ELCA in this position. Her current work involves
4 serving as the director of organizational development
5 for women of the ELCA.

6 We will begin with Doctor Walker.

7 DOCTOR WALKER: Thank you very much.

8 I am a little concerned being called an
9 expert and being a successful one. I'm not so sure
10 that what I am here to share with you has been that
11 successful. It's something we're beginning that we
12 hope will be successful. And I'm not really sure who
13 the experts are. Probably you sitting there.

14 I was asked to discuss a situation,
15 circumstance, of two congregations here in the
16 Louisville community who are trying to move forward
17 with an effort in racial reconciliation. It is our
18 conviction and surely my personal conviction that we
19 start at every level, and that one of the levels that
20 we must begin is at the local, personal level. And
21 that there are some other things that one will do for
22 the more corporate, expansive level.

23 The church I serve, First Gethsemane
24 Baptist Church, has entered into a partnership with

1 the Crescent Hill Baptist Church of this city, two
2 Baptist congregations but very diverse. Crescent Hill
3 is a predominantly white congregation. First
4 Gethsemane is a predominantly African-American
5 congregation. And beyond that and being Baptists, all
6 -- both of us belong to the American Baptist
7 Convention of the South. We both belong to the
8 Southern Baptist Convention. Crescent Hill has joined
9 the Progressive National Baptist Convention and First
10 Gethsemane is a part of the National Baptist
11 Convention. So, if nothing else, we like to go to
12 conventions.

13 But, we share a common faith in Christ.
14 But beyond that, we felt that we ought to do more than
15 what we've heard many congregations doing, black and
16 white congregations, having exchange worship service.
17 In fact, I literally refused to participate in that.
18 I wanted to do something much more meaningful.

19 The pastor, Doctor Siss, at Crescent Hill,
20 he and I are the same age. We graduated from the same
21 seminary. Our wives both are named Cheryl. And we
22 live one block away. But beyond that, we had very
23 little in common. And so, we decided that we would do
24 something together. And we've come together as two

1 congregations. Instead of having an initial worship
2 service, we decided that we needed to decide what the
3 agenda was.

4 And so, we have small groups from each
5 congregation meeting together, meeting in homes.
6 Young lady is here today who invited us to her home
7 just recently. And we are sitting down talking about
8 what the agenda should be for a racial reconciliation
9 between these two Baptist congregations.

10 We have had, successfully, at Christmas,
11 a Christmas party for one of the housing developments
12 here called Park Hill. Had over 500 children that we
13 were able to provide Christmas gifts for them and just
14 have a party together. It was a wonderful opportunity
15 for two congregations to share together.

16 We are going on together as two
17 congregations. And just spending some time, just
18 talking. But we found out that people just really
19 need to spend time sharing one on one, not necessarily
20 in a formal setting. We've also committed to build a
21 home together for Habitat for Humanity, so that we
22 could work together.

23 We felt that God is leading us to go much
24 deeper into a relationship and that if we were going

1 to do this, we had to make a commitment over an
2 extended period of time. We are in the process of
3 writing a covenant, a real covenant that we hope will
4 have substantive meaning to the two congregations.
5 Something that says I do more than I come to your
6 church on Sunday, you come to my church the next
7 Sunday, and I preach there and you preach here, and
8 then we go our separate ways.

9 Whether that's going to be successful or
10 not, we don't know. We are different. We are kind of
11 conservative and they are much more moderate than we
12 are, although some of the black Baptists think we are
13 very moderate. And so, we're finding that we have
14 differences but our differences should not inhibit our
15 involvement together in meaningful ways as
16 congregations.

17 We see this spinning over into the broader
18 community where we serve. We are part of an effort
19 with the Baptist Fellowship Center here in Louisville,
20 a ministry of traditionally white Baptist churches and
21 black Baptist churches, to do ministry together for
22 more than 80 years. And we see members of our
23 churches going to this ministry site, actually doing
24 something for those in our community. And we're

1 committed to a joint effort by Long Run and Central
2 District to bring together not only our congregations
3 but congregations of the community. And that's what
4 we believe is going to be ultimately our success
5 story.

6 MS. OCHI: We can get back in asking you
7 some questions. That's just wonderful. Thank you.

8 Ms. Beverly Watts.

9 MS. WATTS: Thank you.

10 Someone approached me earlier today and
11 asked me if I was taking to the pulpit. Let me submit
12 that I'm probably the evangelist for equality and that
13 it is in that role that I take things very seriously.
14 As I move across the state and hear the cries of more
15 than 10,000 people about the discrimination they're
16 suffering, I started to ask myself, is there a way we
17 can make a difference. And if so, how do we do that.

18 About two years ago we started talking
19 about how we could make differences in communities
20 across the commonwealth and what we could do.
21 Currently there are 15 local human rights commission
22 and under the statute of the Kentucky Civil Rights
23 Act, we have authority to help establish those. In a
24 number of communities, they don't exist. But we

1 thought, what a way for us to identify people at the
2 local level to deal with this issue because I believe
3 the issue of race and race relations have always and
4 always will be a local matter. It is a matter between
5 people. It is a matter of one on one, one individual
6 to another.

7 So, it was that concept that led us to
8 look at how we could reach the most number of people
9 with a limited staff. We contacted a partner called
10 Kentucky Educational Television Network which beamed
11 statewide. And we entered into a joint partnership.
12 We said we want to do a program. We recognize that
13 this will not be the end all, be all. But at least
14 it's some place to start. We talked to them. We put
15 together a one hour program that aired last August the
16 19th.

17 Before we got there, we did a lot of work.
18 We went into some 15 to 20 communities across the
19 state and we started to do a couple of things. We
20 found people that were our allies. They were
21 politicians. But most importantly, they were a group
22 who had birthed this whole civil rights movement.
23 They were church people. So, we contacted ministers
24 in every community but we found that that was not the

1 only place to be. So, we also talked to politicians.
2 We talked to advocates. We even talked to folks that
3 some people thought we shouldn't be talking to, that
4 was those who criticized us a lot. Some of those did
5 not end up joining with us but some did.

6 As a result, we set up what -- six pre-
7 broadcast sites. We trained facilitators and we
8 taught the rules to those facilitators. If you're
9 going to do formal programs, you have to have people
10 who understand that they are really the rule keepers
11 and that they must keep order and civility between
12 people. Because we did not want it to break down into
13 shouting matches, or arguments, or anything of that
14 sort.

15 So, we found facilitators in every
16 community. And we, by design, looked for facilitators
17 who were black and who were white. By and large, this
18 state is black and white. I talked to Inez who will
19 talk to you in a minute. And I lived in Chicago. So,
20 when I did it there, we usually had to have four
21 facilitators, usually, depending on which neighborhood
22 it was. And that was a serious consideration. So,
23 when you look at if you want to do this and you look
24 at -- I think you have to understand who the

1 environment is. I think you have to go with the flow,
2 as they say.

3 And we, by design, found two people in
4 every community who agreed to be facilitators. We
5 found a committee in every community who organized
6 these pre-conversation groups. Then we also set about
7 the notion of having one of our staff people there to
8 serve as a resource doing that. And we ended up with
9 six.

10 We had one site at the studio in Lexington
11 because had to tape in Lexington, Kentucky at KET. It
12 was by far one of the largest. We learned a lot when
13 we went out into the state. We found we didn't know
14 everything and that there were a lot of groups already
15 in existence. So, what we did was said, would you
16 come in and have -- host this for us and most of them
17 said yes. And we were happy. So, it was a matter of
18 looking for where there was richness in communities
19 already.

20 We identified 12 individuals from across
21 the state who we said, would you do a one minute
22 vignette on your view of race in the commonwealth from
23 your community perspective. And again, we
24 deliberately went out. We looked for people in every

1 segment. We had politicians. We had government
2 officials. We had civil rights activists. We had
3 just -- we had ministers. I think we had four of the
4 12. So, we realized that we needed to do that. And
5 a police chief.

6 All of them had had in their various
7 communities some interaction with the whole notion of
8 trying to improve race relations. When they spoke, of
9 course, it went longer than the minute and a half that
10 we had set up for them. And we had to sort of say,
11 what would be the one thing, if you had to summarize
12 it, that you'd want said. Sometimes we took that
13 comment. Sometimes we found there were richer
14 comments throughout the body of the information.

15 We also, then, had the program. And we
16 had four individuals. And again, by design, we had a
17 co-host, a white female, and a black male. And then
18 we had panelists who were black and white, male and
19 female. So, we looked at things from a number of
20 perspectives. The program lasted for an hour.

21 We currently have nine ongoing
22 conversations going on at this point. Our best group
23 is Church Women United -- and I thought I had to bring
24 that up here -- in northern Kentucky. This group

1 decided that they wanted to do something. There were
2 women in the city of Covington and women in northern
3 Kentucky who had never really talked to each other.
4 And they found, what, a common bond in their religion.
5 And Church Women United has ended up being a great
6 catalyst. They're currently putting together
7 materials for the schools in northern Kentucky and
8 they're trying to buy the films and put them in the
9 schools. And we're going to talk to them and see if
10 they can't just find the resources and go back and
11 nudge the school officials to buy them because we
12 think there's value in that, in doing that.

13 What have we learned? We're learning a
14 lot. We're learning that it is still a local issue.
15 As we go into communities, and I think we have five or
16 six groups waiting for us to come in, the challenge is
17 to find facilitators and people who are willing to
18 host it in those communities. We're having a follow
19 up program in August of this year on KET and we're
20 going to do some things to evaluate where we've been.
21 And we're really going to put together a report.
22 We've done a newsletter that goes out and if anyone is
23 interested in that, we'll be able to -- be glad to
24 help.

1 And finally, let me just say that it's
2 never over. It will always be a day by day process.
3 That if we are to live the life and do the things that
4 that carpenter taught us many, many years ago for
5 those of you who believe, you know that you cannot
6 build a house with all wood. You cannot build a house
7 with all nails. It takes different kinds of pieces to
8 build a house.

9 Thank you.

10 Inez Torres Davis.

11 MS. TORRES DAVIS: Anti-racism is one of
12 Women's of the ELCA's emphasis into the next tri-
13 enium, although we recognize it's a commitment that
14 we're probably making at least for two generations.
15 We have worked on this emphasis in a very promising
16 way by using a program called Today's Dream,
17 Tomorrow's Reality. We've established 47 teams
18 nationwide. These are teams of women, one white and
19 one woman of color. Depending upon the geographical
20 location determines what that woman of color may be.

21 The key elements of our program are fairly
22 simple. One, our program springs from our faith base.
23 In our case, that is our faith in the death, burial,
24 and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's based on the

1 sacrament of our baptisms and the sacrament of the
2 Lord's table. It also is based on the Lord's Prayer
3 in John 17 when he prayed for our unity. And it is
4 also based on the scripture that Tony already pulled
5 out which was 1 John 4:17-20, that how can we claim to
6 love a God we haven't seen when we can't even get
7 along with the brothers and sisters that we do see.

8 Two. Our program recognizes that none of
9 us, not one of us, volunteered in utero to be born
10 into a racial society. Therefore, the challenge
11 before us is what are we prepared to do about the fact
12 that we are born into a racial society?

13 The truth is that white people can choose
14 to be ignorant of how racism works. People of color
15 have never had that option. Therefore, it is
16 important that if anti-racism work is done, three,
17 white people need to learn about how racism works and
18 take ownership of the work of combating and
19 dismantling racism. It takes white people to reach
20 white people. When a person of color talks about
21 racism, it can sound as though we're whining or making
22 excuses. But white people are the ones that of the
23 most interesting to most any organization who either
24 abridge or tolerate racist practices within that

1 organization or institution.

2 Also, when a white person talks about a
3 systemic and institutional racism, it is more
4 believable because, four, understanding white skin
5 privilege is central to the analysis of racism that
6 needs to be done. Understanding the historical and
7 practical applications of white skin privilege is part
8 of the analysis that is required to practically, and
9 tactically, address racism.

10 And then, five, the important
11 accountability of white people to people of color must
12 be firmly in place as the analysis goes forward so
13 that white people won't just end up doing a study and
14 -- without tackling the reality check that only -- and
15 adhering and receiving the reality check, that only
16 people of color can actually offer. People of color,
17 you see, are the authorities on racism.

18 But all of this is futile unless, six,
19 there is an accurate definition of racism used. The
20 definition of racism that we use in our program is
21 race prejudice, plus the powers of systems and
22 institutions to support that prejudice. We have found
23 in many attempts prior to this one that an inaccurate
24 or incomplete definition of racism provides for us an

1 inaccurate and incomplete analysis.

2 And then, of course, point seven is the
3 one that runs through our entire program. That it is
4 an analysis that we are doing. We are doing an
5 analysis of institutions and systems specifically
6 Women of the ELCA is doing an analysis of ourselves.
7 And we've begun this to the Office of Education that
8 is within the program itself. Analysis must be done
9 from within an organization or an institution if there
10 really is going to be any real structural change and
11 institutional regeneration.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. OCHI: Our panelists have talked about
14 using constructive race dialogues, same face cross
15 congregations, racial reconciliation efforts, and
16 talked about a race based program and how to reach out
17 and engage larger society. And I'd like to start
18 there and being with a threshold issue.

19 In large part, the civil rights advances
20 came about because there was a spiritual appeal to the
21 moral conscience of the American people. Martin
22 Luther King's message really touched on those values.
23 How do we return to a spiritual grounding in talking
24 about race issues? And I'm going to also add on,

1 across religion, moving from a faith based effort
2 cross religion, how can we come together on some
3 common values, quality, fairness, and justice?
4 Anyone.

5 My sense as a Christian is that to be
6 Christian means that I cannot be a racist. Because I
7 can't use my position as a Christian to hold power
8 over others, to hold them at a disadvantage. That is
9 totally contradictory to what it means to be a
10 Christian for me. And so, as I relate to persons from
11 other faiths, I relate to them, of course, because I'm
12 a Christian, but with that same kind of respect and
13 all that I think Jesus would have for those who are
14 not believers. And that the church, I believe, the
15 Christian church, has to model that. And I respect
16 others who have a position from their perspective.
17 But, if we cannot do that in the Christian church, as
18 others would say that in their own faith, then I feel
19 really my faith is in vain.

20 MS. OCHI: So your efforts of bringing
21 together black and white congregations is a step in
22 that direction.

23 Can I ask someone to comment about how do
24 we move to embracing some of the core values, some of

1 the tenants upon which the nation was founded? Part
2 of the conversation on how we talk about race.

3 MS. WATTS: Yes. I think we have to
4 really, ourselves, set our fear aside. I think we all
5 have a fear of the unknown and we all sometimes when
6 our own fears keep us from reaching out to other
7 individuals. And I think we also have to stop looking
8 at individuals as "the group" but an individual who
9 may happen to belong to a group. And I think that's
10 where the religious community certainly can help us
11 more than any other because I think it is those
12 teachings that teach us that we need to respect
13 difference and we need to reach out to others.

14 MS. OCHI: You talk about fear. Our
15 business is crisis response. And when we see the
16 results appears, the acting out, whether it's
17 vandalism of a Mosque or a synagogue, or the church
18 arsons of black churches, we have seen that these
19 tragedies have resulted in an opportunity to bring
20 people across races and faiths. Can you talk about
21 any of these experiences? I can give you an example
22 of the other areas where you have land use matters, a
23 Buddhist temple or a mosque, is planned for a suburban
24 white community and there's community opposition.

1 What can we do in terms of inter-faith alliances to
2 support communities that have suffered hate crimes and
3 are undergoing the kind of tension brought about with
4 changes in demography?

5 MS. TORRES DAVIS: I guess the words that
6 come to my mind is what Tony said earlier where, at
7 least for myself as a Christian, I was not told that
8 people would come to me but that I should go to them.
9 So, I think that being responsible, personally
10 responsible for my own faith means I live my faith.
11 And that would require that if and when those
12 situations arise, that I speak to those who suffered
13 such an injustice, such hate. And in a way that is
14 practical, direct, and also shows that we're in this
15 to be a partner.

16 Your earlier question, though, I'd like to
17 also address that in the program that I outlined,
18 there is no reason that program could not be
19 replicable within any faith tradition. Because I
20 think, and you mentioned those tenants on which this
21 country was founded. It's very difficult for me as a
22 woman of color to completely embrace those tenants
23 since I was never considered or recognized in the
24 wording of those things.

1 However, I believe that the spirit of
2 goodness which is what always continues to rise, is
3 also being called the spirit of truth which will
4 continue to rise up, can have us now turn and say that
5 even if those who stated these words in the beginning
6 really didn't recognize the humanity of all who are
7 now present, we can still pull out from them the
8 purpose, the highest purpose. And my understanding is
9 that is what all of these meetings are about, is to
10 pull out the promising practices and see where can we
11 find our inspiration. Where can we find a tool to use
12 because our faith is indeed something that informs the
13 way we live.

14 MS. OCHI: The time keeper is looking at
15 me. I'm trying -- I'm facing this way so I can ignore
16 her for a moment.

17 If you could just take a minute and I had
18 a lot of questions, but grab one of them. If you were
19 to start again, what were some of the lessons learned.
20 What are the pitfalls or what was an element that made
21 your program successful? Just reel down the road
22 here.

23 Let's start with Beverly?

24 MS. WATTS: It would be all the

1 collaborators that we found in communities across the
2 commonwealth. It would be that the facilitators and
3 the ground rules. And it was really their willingness
4 to get involved, to help to make a difference. And I
5 think it's basically people that we always have to
6 make a difference and it is that premise under which
7 I live and I think others do as well. But, it is that
8 that made it the most successful. And we're still
9 learning.

10 By the way, for someone who wants to know,
11 the Department of Education in Kentucky has something
12 called Diversity Ambassadors for young people and it
13 is a statewide initiative. So, if you're interested,
14 let me know.

15 MS. OCHI: Reverend Walker.

16 DOCTOR WALKER: I think mine would be a
17 personal situation that occurred in my life. I
18 realized I've been in the ministry over 20 years, but
19 I realized just a few years ago that I was not
20 pastoring a black church. When I looked out at the
21 congregation and I realized that people that I was
22 ministering to were not all African-Americans, that
23 God had called me to a much higher calling than to
24 preach to black people. When I realized that, I

1 realized at reconciliation needed to begin in me first
2 and then I needed to reach out to my brother. And so,
3 if I had to start over, I would start over by
4 recognizing I pastor the church of the Lord, Jesus
5 Christ and not a black church.

6 MS. TORRES DAVIS: Earlier failures were
7 caused by our inability to recognize the institutional
8 systemic nature of racism. We thought it was enough
9 for us just to hold hands and sing "We Shall
10 Overcome."

11 Two, another thing that causes
12 frustrations early on was our inability to identify
13 the real stakeholders.

14 Three, tokenism causes some problems.
15 Tokenism can run rampant within communities of color
16 whereas because you have me here, I'm supposedly to
17 speak for all Hispanics. It doesn't work that way.

18 And, four, then the failure to continue to
19 call the stakeholders to the table so there can be an
20 ongoing dialogue as you work out the programmatic
21 thrust of whatever you're endeavor to do.

22 MS. OCHI: Thank you very much.

23 Thirty minutes is tough but we're all
24 going to be participating in the break out sessions

1 and you can pull from them some of the other handy
2 hints and tidbits.

3 In closing, I believe the major challenge
4 before us is to reclaim the Americans' conscious. And
5 that we need to restore the real moral imperative of
6 racial equality and to recreate a national consensus
7 that discrimination is wrong. And that we turn this
8 race debate back to its core concepts of equality,
9 opportunity, and fair play. Because as long as our
10 national creed is deeply rooted in these concepts,
11 progress on race relations will ultimately be the
12 measure of our civilization.

13 So, we look forward to working with you in
14 the days ahead to arrive at an understanding that only
15 together will we have a better future for us all.
16 Thank you very much.

17 DOCTOR COOK: All of our presenters this
18 afternoon, thank you so much for thought provoking
19 dialogue. It's good to see you again. God bless you.

20 At this time, we are prepared for the
21 break out sessions which we spoke to you about earlier
22 today. The break out sessions will be an opportunity
23 for you to engage in dialogue, to not only listen to
24 one another but to also share your promising

1 practices. And hopefully come up with some
2 suggestions and some solutions that we can take back
3 to the Initiative and to Washington.

4 Each group will have a leader and each of
5 you have the name tag with a number on your badge. As
6 we leave this room and prepare to leave this room,
7 we're going to ask that you will go out of the main
8 door. And as you go, there will be staff and
9 volunteers leading you towards the stairs. At each of
10 the stairwells, there are signs that will share with
11 you where your break out rooms are. Primarily it's on
12 the second and third floor of this facility.

13 Groups 1 through 12 for the most part are
14 down on the second floor and the other groups are on
15 the third floor. But as you go and as you're
16 directed, you'll be very clear. Every room is marked.
17 The leaders will identify themselves and they will
18 share with you the process that we will follow for
19 this afternoon.

20 We're asking that you go and that you
21 please return to this room at 3:20. It is now ten
22 minutes until 2:00. If you'll return here at 3:20,
23 that we may close together, hear from some of you, and
24 then close our day appropriately. But you've been

1 most patient and we thank you. If you'll just exit to
2 my right, your left. The staff is ready to receive
3 you.

4 Thank you so much.

5 (Whereupon, off the record for the break
6 out sessions.)

7 MR. WENGER: Let us begin our concluding
8 session.

9 My name is Mike Wenger. I'm the Deputy
10 Director for Outreach and Program Development for the
11 President's Initiative on Race. And the first order
12 of business, my first obligation, is to say that Mrs.
13 Ramsey has a message. I don't know who Mrs. Ramsey is
14 but the message is on the second floor in the
15 administration office, I understand.

16 In any event, let me first thank some
17 people. First, Mayor Abramson, Mora Temis, and staff
18 in the Mayor's office for their incredible support and
19 leadership.

20 Second, Doctor Oates and the Spalding
21 University family for their incredible hospitality.

22 Doctor Campolo for an incredibly
23 inspirational message. Doctor Eck for being there
24 when some of us were stuck on the ground in

1 Washington, D.C. and for doing a terrific job of
2 moderating a panel which she didn't expect to
3 moderate. The panelists; Reverend Suzan Johnson Cook,
4 a member of the President's Advisory Board on Race;
5 Rose Ochi, the Director of the Community Relations
6 Service for the Department of Justice; staff of the
7 President's Initiative on Race, Danielle Glosser,
8 Karen Burchard, Lydia Sermons, and Anna Lopez; and
9 White House staff member in the Office of Public
10 Liaison, Debbie Mohill. And most of all, the
11 facilitators and you, the participants in this forum.

12 I'm reminded of a -- one of my favorite
13 quotes at all of these forums. I'm reminded of this
14 quote by Margaret Meade who's a famed anthropologist.
15 And she said quite a while ago, "Never doubt that a
16 small group of thoughtful and committed people can
17 change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that
18 ever has."

19 And what we're about here is changing our
20 little corner of the world and in so doing, hopefully
21 we may truly change the world. Make no mistake about
22 it. This is difficult, emotionally draining work. It
23 takes courage to begin it. It takes courage to
24 persevere. But it is essential that we persevere.

1 I stand before you as a member of what I
2 guess I would call a mosaic family. I am Jewish. I
3 am married to a born again Christian woman who was
4 raised Irish Catholic. I was formerly married to an
5 African-American woman and have three African-American
6 children, all of whom are Baptists and have some
7 Cherokee blood in them. And my son, who is now 25, is
8 currently dating a Muslim woman.

9 So, I understand a little bit about the
10 mosaic that is this country. And I want to tell you
11 just a couple of quick stories which illustrate for me
12 the importance of interaction and communication across
13 racial lines, across ethnic lines, across religious
14 lines.

15 Last September we went to Rhode Island to
16 celebrate my mother-in-law's 75th birthday. And we
17 took with us my five year old granddaughter. And she
18 was the only African-American person in a group of 25
19 or 30 people at this party and she was the only sub-
20 teenager. Five years old running around having a
21 terrific time. Cute as can be and I say without fear
22 of contradiction, she's the cutest five year old you
23 will ever see.

24 In any event, my wife was sitting with my

1 mother-in-law's best friend. And at one point my
2 mother-in-law's best friend turned to my wife and
3 said, you know, she is just adorable. She is as cute
4 as can be. Does she have any brothers or sisters?
5 And my wife said, yes, she's got a three year old
6 sister. And the woman, with no malice and only love
7 in her heart because she'd been admiring Arianne,
8 said, "Oh, do they live with their mother?" Now,
9 implicit in that question was an assumption, a
10 stereotype, that most African-American women, most
11 African-American mothers, are single mothers. And
12 most African-American fathers are not around to raise
13 their children. And my mother-in-law, who ten years
14 ago could well have asked the same question, perhaps
15 with malice, turned with indignation to her best
16 friend and said, "And with their father, too."

17 Now, why is that important? It's
18 important because the impact of that stereotype of my
19 mother-in-law's best friend may well drive the nature
20 of public support for the nature of welfare reform
21 policies which we undertake in this country. And a
22 variety of other policies.

23 I'll tell you another quick story. My son
24 went to Morehouse College in Atlanta. And one day

1 several years ago he was walking down the street in
2 downtown Atlanta with two of his friends, all of whom
3 fairly I'd say olive skinned young people. No boom
4 box. No baggy jeans. No loud voices. Just three
5 young college men, middle class, looking for a place
6 to spend their parent's money. And I can show you the
7 empty wallet to prove it.

8 There's a white woman coming toward them.
9 When she saw them, she crossed the street. When she
10 passed them, she crossed back. Now, why did she do
11 that? Clearly out of fear. Clearly out of -- I mean,
12 I don't know this woman. But in all likelihood out of
13 fear, out of some stereotype that she held of young
14 black males which made her fearful. Now, why is that
15 important? Because the impact of her fear on the
16 nature of criminal policies which are supported in
17 this country.

18 What I'm trying to say is that the
19 stereotypes we hold, the fears we hold, drive public
20 policy in this country. And so, we cannot allow those
21 stereotypes to endure. We cannot allow those fears to
22 rule. And that is why President Clinton created the
23 President's Initiative on Race. And that is why we
24 need you. Our time with the initiative is limited.

1 We can plant seeds of racial reconciliation. But that
2 is all we can do.

3 Today was just a beginning here. You, in
4 Louisville, and elsewhere, have to nurture and
5 cultivate these seeds, and plant new ones as we go
6 forward. How? Through your promising practices, and
7 I hope you will have turned in all of your promising
8 practices forms to Anna Lopez. Through the ideas and
9 information that came out today, and I hope you will
10 turn in those forms as well that came out of the small
11 group discussions. Through the use of the dialogue
12 guide which was in your materials. Through the use of
13 the promising practices compendium which will be
14 issued at the end of this year. Through a
15 continuation of this dialogue on your own, in your
16 communities, within your congregations, among
17 congregations, and ensuring that those dialogues lead
18 to community action to address problems of racial
19 divisions. And by living every day of each of our
20 lives in recognition of our own responsibility to
21 building one America.

22 Will we make it to one America? We all
23 know how difficult the work is. There's an author who
24 wrote a book, who's actually a professor of political

1 science at my alma mater, Queens College in New York
2 City. His name is Doctor Andrew Hacker. And a couple
3 of years ago he wrote a book entitled Two Nations.
4 And in that book he asks, are we one nation under God
5 or two nations manacled by race? The responses to the
6 President's Initiative on Race would suggest that we
7 may be moving ever so slowly toward one nation under
8 God. We have had an enormously positive response all
9 over the country to the President's initiative. But
10 the continuing instances of discrimination, the
11 persistent disparities that exist, in per capita
12 income, educational attainment, among others, make it
13 clear that we remain manacled by race.

14 So, the ultimate answer to Doctor Hacker's
15 question depends on each of us. After all, we all
16 share common values, a thirst for freedom, a desire
17 for equal opportunity, a belief in fairness and
18 essential justice, faith in a higher power. We all
19 possess common aspirations. We all want a decent
20 home, a fulfilling job, healthy and educated children
21 whose dreams for a bright future are not a mirage but
22 a vision of reality. And we all feel the same
23 emotions. We all feel joy at the birth of a child,
24 sadness at the death of a loved one, love for our

1 family, anger at people who disrespect us, hope for
2 the future, and frustration at the daily barriers that
3 we encounter. And we all aspire to the President's
4 vision of one America in which we honor and respect
5 the differences which make each of us unique and
6 special while recognizing and celebrating the common
7 thread which binds us inextricably together. An
8 America in which justice and equal opportunity for all
9 are a constant reality. An America in which we can
10 all feel empowered to reach our full potential.

11 There's a wonderful quote from Duke
12 Ellington. He said, "Every piece of music is in the
13 piano. It's up to us to get it out." And to get that
14 music out, to ensure that every American has the
15 opportunity to get their music out, to be the best
16 that he or she can be, we all have to take
17 responsibility.

18 It's as Rabbi Abraham Heschel has said, we
19 may not all be guilty but we are all responsible. And
20 the future of our nation depends on each of us sharing
21 that responsibility. That's what building one America
22 is all about. President Clinton has said that
23 building one America is our most important mission.
24 Money cannot buy it. Power cannot compel it.

1 Technology cannot create it. It can only come from
2 the human spirit.

3 The President's initiative on race is
4 about touching the human spirit. And if we all take
5 responsibility, we can, together, build one America.
6 Not with money, not with power, not with technology,
7 but with the spirit of hope and fairness which has
8 brought us all here today.

9 And on that note, I want to thank you all
10 for coming and for participating. And I want to
11 introduce to you two people who will do the
12 benediction. In New Orleans, the Religious Leaders
13 forum we had a couple of weeks ago, it was suggested
14 that one way to demonstrate the diversity of our
15 faiths would be to have a benediction performed by
16 several members of the clergy from different faiths.
17 So, today we're really fortunate to have two men to
18 help us conclude this forum and to give us the
19 strength to leave here with a renewed commitment to
20 building one America.

21 Rabbi Stanley Miles, during the past 20
22 years, has built a congregation at Temple Shalom in
23 Louisville from fewer than 50 families to more than
24 200 families. He's a teacher, former chair of both

1 the Louisville Board of Rabbis and Cantors, and the
2 Louisville Jewish Community Relations Council; former
3 president of the Kentuckian Inter-faith Community; and
4 a former and current commissioner on the Louisville
5 and Jefferson County Human Relations Commission.

6 Recently, Rabbi Miles helped to initiate
7 a monthly service of healing in his congregation. And
8 he describes the purpose of his rabbinate as follows.
9 Through the teaching of the Torah and the spiritual
10 nature of worship, I hope to move myself and my
11 congregation to perform deeds that will help repair
12 the world.

13 Mr. Alfred W. Yazzie is the cultural
14 advisor of the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation
15 Department and for the Navajo Nation Administration,
16 and he's a renown Navajo chanter of the Navajo night
17 way ceremony. He's a former Marine, a graduate of the
18 FBI Academy in Langley, Virginia, and retired after
19 serving for 24 years in the Navajo Nation's police
20 force, rising to become its police chief.

21 Mr. Yazzie is from Fort Defiance, Arizona,
22 and presently lives on his family land at Black Rock
23 which is near Fort Defiance where he's writing several
24 books on Navajo ethno-history and oral traditions

1 while serving his people as a healer and advisor, and
2 teaching Navajo youth the centuries old customs and
3 traditions of Navajo culture.

4 Will Rabbi Miles please join us and then
5 Mr. Yazzie.

6 RABBI MILES: During these days, Jewish
7 people around the world celebrate the time of the
8 giving of the ten commandants. It is interesting to
9 note that the ten commandants were given in a desolate
10 place, in a no person's land, in the wilderness of
11 Sinai, belonging to no people whatsoever. The one --
12 the two million people who stood at the foot of those
13 mountains receiving those laws received them not only
14 for themselves and their children, not only for the
15 Jewish people, but for the entire human race. These
16 laws stand for the principle of Tikkin Olam, of repair
17 of our world. This is our task.

18 We, as we end this conference, feel as
19 though we, too, are standing at a foot of a mountain,
20 a mountain of the proportions of Everest because our
21 job is difficult. Will we succeed? Partially. Will
22 we complete the task? Probably not. Yet, are we free
23 from this enterprise? Never. Never. Never. Never.
24 We must join with all peoples of good will in order to

1 repair this world the Almighty has entrusted to us.

2 Kein Y'hee Ratson, may this be our
3 collective and communal will.

4 Amen.

5 MR. YAZZIE: If you don't mind standing.

6 We'll use what we call the sacred corn
7 pollen as an offering to the Gods. Put a little bit
8 in your mouth to bless your body. And to make it into
9 God's, if you want to.

10 To the great spirits of this universe,
11 Mother Earth, Father Sky, to the Gods of this world,
12 today we are gathered here, humble, not knowing what
13 to say. But we are committed to do our best to make
14 this a better world for our children, our future
15 children. And we're asking for your blessings to make
16 us strong physically and mentally so that from this
17 conference with your permission, allow us to go forth
18 from here in beauty. Allow us to go forth with beauty
19 ahead, beauty behind us, beauty below us, beauty above
20 us, and beauty all around us, and beauty from within.

21 We do know that we make mistakes. We do
22 know that we commit sins. But we ask for your
23 forgiveness. Make us strong this day and allow us to
24 please our leader of this country. Allow his wishes

1 to become true, to make us understand one another.

2 And also, we ask for your blessings that
3 we learn to live in peace because we all look forward
4 to the day when our women and children may walk the
5 dark streets without fear.

6 With this, let us return to our homes, to
7 our families, to our loved ones, to our people, to our
8 communities, and to the things that we do physically
9 strong and mentally strong, and with happiness.

10 With this, let there be beauty towards us
11 from the ends of the land, from the ends of the waters
12 and the sea, from the ends of the skies, from the ends
13 of the mountains, in all directions, from the high
14 points, the low points, from all life around us. Let
15 us learn to respect ourselves.

16 (Whereupon, speaks in Navajo.)

17 Amen.

18 MR. WENGER: Thank you very much for
19 coming and God speed.

20 (Whereupon, at 4:10 p.m. the forum was
21 concluded.)

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