

The **Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution (CRDC)** hosted a talk on Monday, April 26, 2010 entitled “*Interfaith Peacemaking: Creating a Narrative of Peace.*” The two speakers, inspirational peacemakers Kia Scherr and Reverend Charles Gibbs, shared their powerful stories of working to build cultures of peace, justice and healing through interfaith cooperation. They shared how their respective organizations engage these issues and shared some of their best practices for local, regional, and global organizing.



Kia Scherr opened up the event with her powerful, moving, and personal story. Speaking from her heart, Kia shared how her husband and daughter were killed in the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Instead of perpetuating the cycle of violence, Kia responded with love and forgiveness towards the terrorists, eventually starting the organization [One Life Alliance](#). Their mission is to inspire and encourage the conversation to honor the sacredness of life, in every and any way possible.



Next, Reverend Charles Gibbs introduced the work of United Religions Initiative (URI). He started with the story of its founding back in 1993. After

being invited by the UN to host an interfaith service, Episcopal Bishop William Swing asked himself, “*If the nations of the world are working together for peace through the UN, then where are the religions of the world?*” From this inspiration, emerged URI - an organization where people of diverse faiths and from all sectors of society cooperate for peace and justice for all. Today there are thousands of members in over 65 countries representing more than 100 religions, spiritual expressions, and indigenous traditions.



A rich discussion ensued with a highly inspired and engaged audience. Topics that were explored included the power of inner spiritual work in promoting peace, the concept of grassroots organizing being uniquely suited to meet local needs, the power of forgiveness, the frustration at the lack of media interest in peace work, and the need to come together collectively in our efforts. The evening ending with everyone exchanging contact information in the hopes of keeping connected.

The [Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution \(CRDC\)](#), part of George Mason University’s Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), was proud to sponsor the event. The mission of CRDC is to engage in practice, education, and research concerning peacebuilding in conflicts where religion and culture play a significant role in both destructive conflict and peacebuilding. CRDC works to support emerging networks of indigenous and global peacebuilders, and creating linkages between peacebuilders, citizen diplomats, and policy makers.

The Center is headed by [Rabbi Dr. Marc Gopin](#), who is also the James H. Laue Professor of Religion, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at ICAR. Dr. Gopin has lectured throughout the world, engaged in back channel diplomacy, and trained thousands of people in peacemaking strategies. His most recent book, *“To Make the Earth Whole: Citizen Diplomacy in an Age of Religious Militancy,”* emphasizes the power of incremental positive change through actions like those of Kia Scherr and Reverend Gibbs.

