

Women's Interfaith Initiatives After 9/11



The Pluralism Project &
Radcliffe Institute for Advanced
Study
Harvard University

The Pluralism Project

Women's Initiative

Consultations

1. Consultation on Women's Networks in Multi-Religious America, April 28 & 29, 2001
2. Women's Networks in Multi-Religious America: After September 11, November 2, 2001
3. Consultation on Women's Networks in Multi-Religious America, April 27-29, 2002
4. Women, Religion & Social Change II, April 30 - May 4, 2003
5. Religion and Politics 2004: Women's Votes, Women's Voices, September 13, 2004

Seminar Questions

- What kinds of women's interfaith initiatives have emerged since 9/11? What specifically defines those initiatives that were formed after 9/11?
- Are women's interfaith initiatives redefining women's religious leadership?
- Are they creating new venues for women's participation in the interfaith movement? The women's movement?

Seminar Goals

- Establish a necessary link between grassroots practitioners and academics.
- Document these historic initiatives.
- Explore the methodologies and models at play.
 - Identify best practices and lessons learned.
- Consider their implications for:
 - Women's religious leadership
 - The interfaith movement
 - The women's movement

Seminar Participants

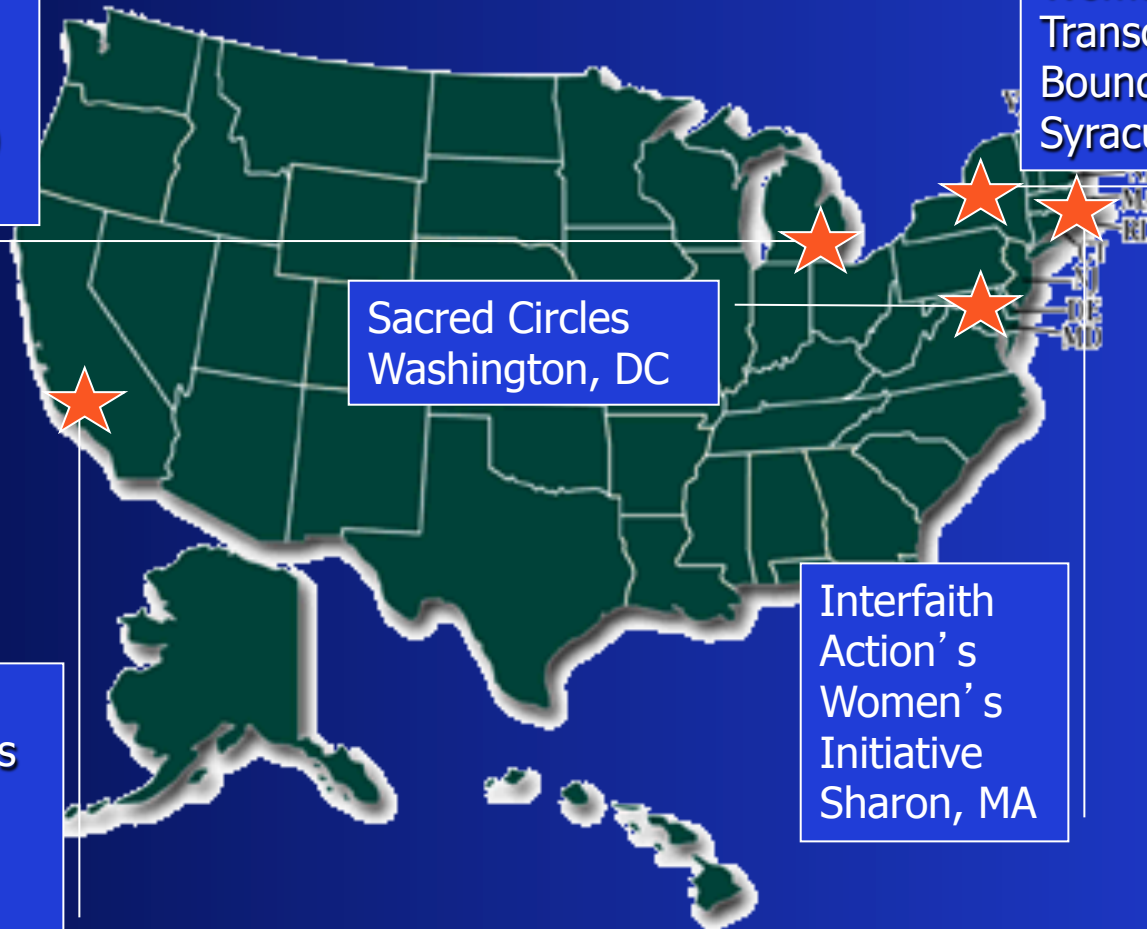
Women's Interfaith
Solutions for Dialogue
and Outreach in
MetroDetroit (WISDOM)
Detroit, MI

Women
Transcending
Boundaries
Syracuse, NY

Sacred Circles
Washington, DC

Interfaith
Action's
Women's
Initiative
Sharon, MA

SARAH
(Spiritual and Religious
Alliance for Hope)
Rancho Santa
Margarita, CA



Other women's interfaith Initiatives to Keep in Mind...

- JAM Women's Group, *North Miami, FL*
- The Faith Club, *New York, NY*
- Daughters of Abraham, *Cambridge, MA*
- Women's Interfaith Institute in the Fingerlakes/The Berkshires, *New York*
- Women's Interfaith Breakfasts, *Laconia, NH*
- Interfaith Gathering of Women in Los Angeles
- Women's Interfaith Prayer Group, *Berrien Springs, MI*
- Women's Interfaith Circle of Palm Beach County, *West Palm Beach, FL*
- Woman to Woman Project of the Interfaith Association of Snohomish County, *Everett, Washington*
- Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis' Annual Women's Interfaith Conference
- Ventura Interfaith Ministerial Association's Annual All Faiths Women of Vision Conference, *Ventura, CA*
- Women's Interfaith Spiritual Encounter (WISE), *Newburyport, MA*
- Women of Spirit Conference, *Omaha, NE*
- Atlanta Women's Foundation Faith, Feminism and Philanthropy Initiative

Women's Interfaith Initiatives

New Models

- Inspired by a commitment to community-building
- Formed at the behest of a personal invitation
- Tend toward common action
- Honor the centrality of storytelling and relationship building
 - Bedrock of women's interfaith initiatives
 - Constructive, complementary model
 - Linking together on a human level
 - Developing a shared story

Basic Commonalities

Common Beginnings

- Met for coffee (WTB, WISDOM, DoA)
- Building/Construction Projects (SARAH, WISDOM)

Common Activities:

- Visits to religious centers (WTB, SARAH, WISDOM)
- Book discussions (WTB, SARAH, DoA, TFC)
- Cooking (WTB, SARAH)
- Tapestries/Quilts for Peace (SARAH, WISDOM)
- Utilizing internet technologies for communications (ALL)

Common Mission/Vision (ALL):

- Sharing stories/getting to know each other
- Dialogue
- Education
- Service to the community/world

Introduction of Faculty Participants

- Dr. Leila Ahmed
- Rev. Dr. Dorothy Austin
- Dr. Ann Braude
- Dr. Shahla Haeri
- Dr. Barbara Kellerman
- Dr. Neelima Shukla-Bhatt

Presentations of Women's Interfaith Organizations



SARAH (Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope),
Sande Hart



Women's Interfaith Solutions for Dialogue and Outreach
in MetroDetroit (WISDOM), *Gail Katz and Trish Harris*



Women Transcending Boundaries, *Danya Wellmon and
Betsy Wiggins*



Sacred Circles Conferences at the Washington National
Cathedral, *Grace Ogden*

- Interfaith Action's Women's Initiative, *Janet Penn*

Presentations of Other Organizations

- Muslim Women's League, *Dr. Laila Al-Marayati*
- East Bay Meditation Center, *Mushim Ikeda-Nash*
- Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), *Dr. Mary Hunt*
- The Interfaith Alliance, *Suzie Armstrong*
- The Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Dr. Amy Caiazza*

Faculty Feedback & Discussion

- Insights from women's studies, religious studies, leadership studies, psychology, & American religious history
- What kinds of models and methodologies are at play?
 - Are there models, best practices, and lessons learned from the other organizations that are useful in this task?
- How can we effectively study these new organizations as part of larger movements (ie. women's & interfaith)?

Questions for Working Groups

- How would you describe the models at play in these women's interfaith organizations? Are they new models? What makes them unique?
- What are the commonalities among the organizations? Differences?
- What are the best practices? Lessons learned?
- Are there other women's interfaith organizations, initiatives, networks, or informal linkages that you know of or work with?
- Are women's interfaith initiatives redefining women's religious leadership? In what ways?
- Are they creating new venues for women's participation in the interfaith movement? The women's movement? How so?
- What uniquely defines the post 9/11 initiatives?