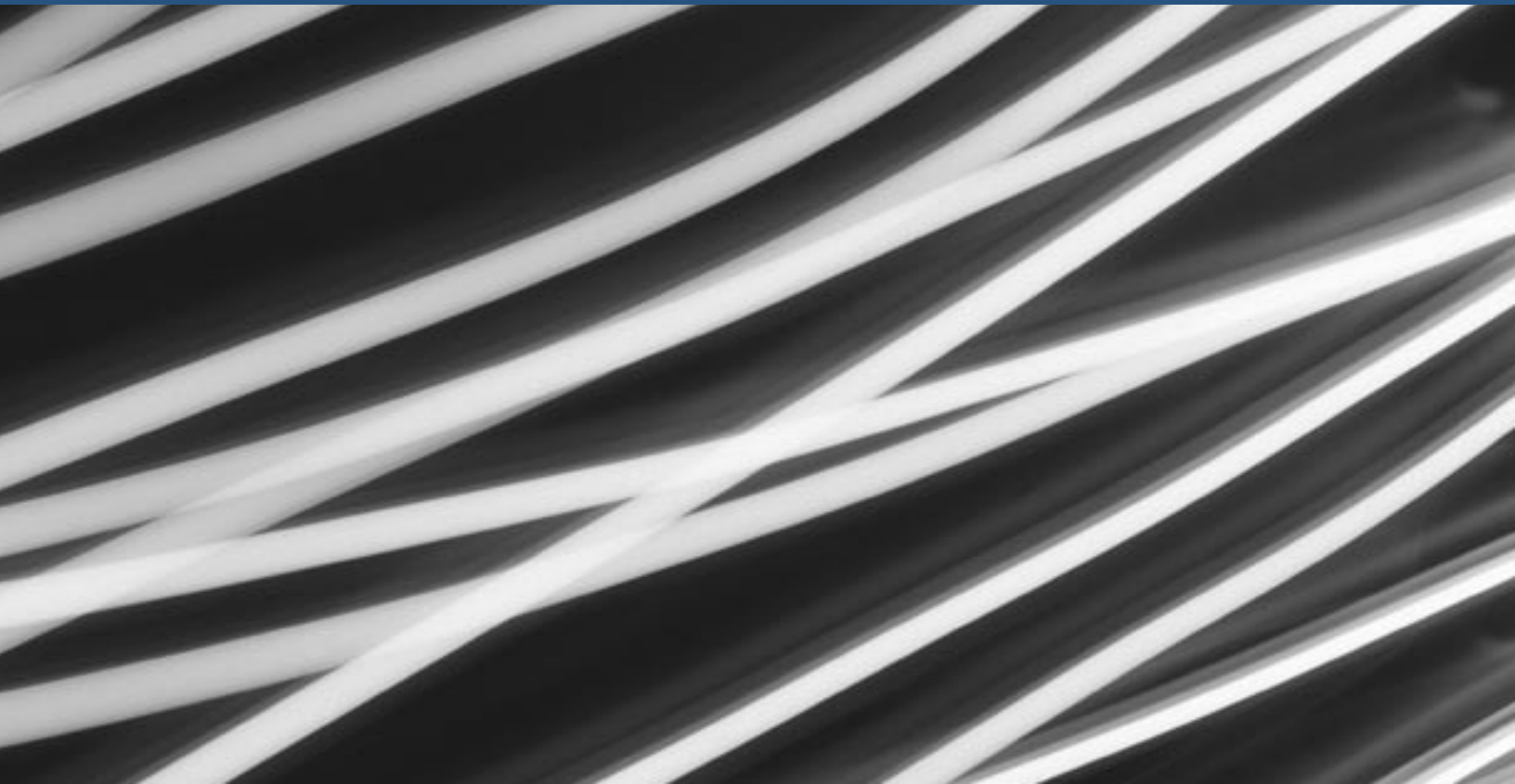


THE BAHÁ'Í CHAIR FOR WORLD PEACE  
ORIGINS AND LEGACY:  
1993-2004

By Glen Fullmer



## **Acknowledgements**

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Given the mission at our center, your ideas on world peace, and the willingness of the University to proudly invite Bahá'ís to explore and discuss the Bahá'í point of view in a scholarly and objective manner and to disseminate these ideas to students, scholars and government officials in Washington and elsewhere in the world, I propose...we establish a Chair and a program on Bahá'í studies at this Center.

Professor Edward Azar, 1988



# 1

ORIGINS

In the early 1980s, Professor Edward Azar, a Lebanese political scientist and professor at the University of Maryland, took a two-year leave to serve President Amine Gemayel of Lebanon as senior advisor on political and security affairs. Professor Azar was the director of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), which he had founded in 1982 in the university's College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. He arrived in Lebanon shortly after the country's tragic descent into civil war and was keenly aware of the ethical, spiritual and cultural dimensions of the conflict.

The war had shattered Lebanon's image as a symbol of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among cultures and peoples. Lebanon's fabled cedars, her fragrant hills and valleys, were celebrated in the poetry and scripture of Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. Her capital, the gleaming and cosmopolitan Beirut, was known as the Paris of the Middle East. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she had been home to a renaissance of Arabic literature, one that portended an age of progress, enlightenment and harmony of faith and reason. This spirit of universalism was perhaps best captured by her poet-laureate, Kahlil Gibran, in his masterwork *The Prophet*, a remarkable Christian-Muslim synthesis that resonated deeply with followers of both Jesus and Mohammed and which became the best selling book of the 20<sup>th</sup> century after the Bible.

This dream was destroyed with the outbreak of civil war in the late 1970s, a conflict that prefigured in many ways the tensions and forces that continue to agitate the world with ever-greater insistence. On his arrival in Lebanon, Professor Azar soon came into contact with Dr. Suheil Bushrui, a professor of English and Arabic literature at the American University of Beirut who was serving as the president's senior advisor for interreligious

and intercultural reconciliation. In Lebanon's fragmented society, political conflict was very often coterminous with communal conflict based on religious and cultural identity. Azar and Bushrui—the political scientist and the poet—became friends and labored side by side in efforts to mediate conflict and promote reconciliation. For his contributions to interfaith understanding and Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue, Bushrui was subsequently awarded the Lebanese National Order of Merit.

They parted ways when Azar returned to the University of Maryland and Bushrui took a professorship at Oxford University. But before long, Azar contacted Bushrui with an invitation. "What we could not do in Lebanon," he said, "let us try to accomplish in America." In 1985, Bushrui joined the CIDCM faculty as Kahlil Gibran Professor of Values and Peace, reflecting his status as one of the world's foremost authorities on Gibran's life and work.

Professor Azar's insight—that culture and religion are key elements in conflict resolution and peace-building—has only gained currency and relevance with the passage of the years. One of the seminal, if controversial, works of post-Cold War political science is Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, which argues that the most pervasive and dangerous conflicts are now cultural conflicts at the fault lines between the six or seven principal civilizations on earth. The book suggests that world peace can only come about on the basis of a Civilization—with a capital C—that integrates and harmonizes the rich accomplishments of all the world's great civilizations. And further, referring to the role of religion, Professor Huntington states: "Whatever the degree to which they divided humankind, the world's major religions...also share key values in common. If humans are ever to develop a universal civilization, it will

emerge gradually through the exploration and expansion of these commonalities.”

On his arrival in Maryland, Professor Bushrui brought with him a perspective that went a step further. He had been asked by the Universal House of Justice, the elected governing council of the worldwide Bahá'í community, to translate into Arabic the text of a statement titled *The Promise of World Peace*. Issued in October 1985 and addressed “To the Peoples of the World,” the statement began:

The Great Peace towards which people of good will throughout the centuries have inclined their hearts, of which seers and poets for countless generations have expressed their vision, and for which from age to age the sacred scriptures of mankind have constantly held the promise, is now at long last within the reach of the nations. For the first time in history it is possible for everyone to view the entire planet, with all its myriad diversified peoples, in one perspective. World peace is not only possible but inevitable. It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet...Whether peace is to be reached only after unimaginable horrors precipitated by humanity's stubborn clinging to old patterns of behaviour, or is to be embraced now by an act of consultative will, is the choice before all who inhabit the earth.

*The Promise of World Peace* was a seminal statement for the Bahá'í community, marking a stage when the faith was emerging as a world religion with a significant following in virtually every country of the world. The Bahá'í Faith was also the largest religious minority in Iran, the country of its birth, with some 300,000 adherents. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, there was a deliberate effort by Iranian authorities to eliminate the faith as a viable

religious community through executions, mob killings, plundering of property, expulsion of Bahá'ís from universities and most professions, and other forms of persecution. Hundreds of Bahá'ís were killed, tens of thousands took refuge in other countries. Although the most blatant forms of persecution began to abate in the mid-1980s under intense international pressure, the Iranian Bahá'í community continues to be subjected to systematic oppression.

Ultimately, however, Bahá'ís saw the situation in Iran as only one symptom of a global crisis of civilization that could only be resolved through the gradual emergence of a universal Civilization. *The Promise of World Peace* was an effort to condense and formulate the requirements for this emerging civilization and to demonstrate that it is rooted in the genuine traditions and aspirations of the world's peoples. It pointed to the principal sources of conflict in the world—racism, extremes of wealth and poverty, unbridled nationalism, religious intolerance, oppression of women—and prescribed unity based on global spiritual values as the solution. The statement pointed to evidences of growing unity and integration throughout the world and presented the global Bahá'í community as “an example of this enlarging unity”:

[The Bahá'í community] is a single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles, and cherishing equally all the great outpourings of divine guidance in human history. Its existence is yet another convincing proof of the practicality of its Founder's vision of a united world, another evidence that humanity can live as one global society, equal to whatever challenges its coming of age may entail. If the Bahá'í experience can contribute

in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study.

As Bushrui translated the statement into Arabic, it was only natural for him to share the contents with Azar, who found the analysis highly significant and relevant to the mission of CIDCM. Azar found, as he later said in an interview, that the statement offered concepts “critical for fostering global interdependence, enhancing international development and promoting collective survival.” On December 18, 1988, Azar wrote to the Universal House of Justice:

My colleagues and I at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management have read and thought about your document, ‘The Promise of World Peace.’ With this letter I am answering on behalf of CIDCM and the University of Maryland your call: ‘If the Bahá’í experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study.’ I am convinced that the principles you articulate so well in this document have greater validity than some of the values and models we impart in our classrooms in today’s U.S. universities...

Given the mission at our center, your ideas on world peace, and the willingness of the University to proudly invite Bahá’ís to explore and discuss the Bahá’í point of view in a scholarly and objective manner and to disseminate these ideas to students, scholars and government officials in Washington and elsewhere in the world, I propose...we establish a Chair and a program on Bahá’í studies at this Center.

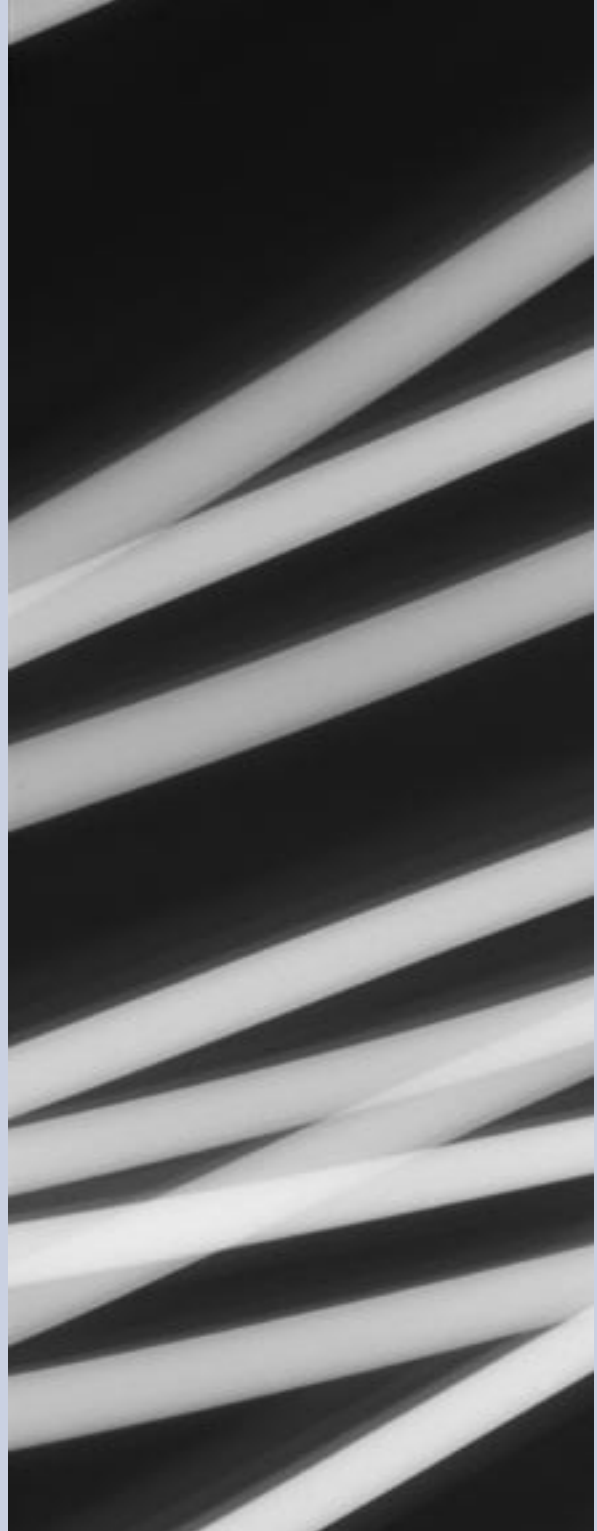
The Universal House of Justice responded enthusiastically to this proposal and

immediately took steps to create an academic chair on firm footing. An International Advisory Board was established under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States. On January 26, 1990, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly met with Dr. Abdel Omran, acting director of CIDCM, and Dr. Murray Polakoff, Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Bahá’í Chair at CIDCM. At the signing ceremony, attended by some 150 guests, Dr. William F. Gibson, Chairman of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP, delivered the keynote address, relating racism and ethnic conflict to the themes outlined in the Bahá’í Peace Statement. The National Spiritual Assembly made an initial \$300,000 donation toward the Chair’s endowment, while an anonymous donor in the audience contributed an additional \$50,000. Over the next couple of years an adequate endowment fund was raised, to which Bahá’ís and others from around the world contributed generously.

On January 22, 1993, Dr. Suheil Bushrui was installed as the first incumbent of the Bahá’í Chair for World Peace at a ceremony at the University of Maryland’s College Park campus attended by more than 400 guests. In his address to the gathering, the president of the university, Dr. William Kirwan, said: “To the members of the Bahá’í Faith, let me say how mindful we at the university are of the enormous honor you have bestowed upon the institution in allowing us to create a Chair in your name at the institution. We feel a deep sense of responsibility to you.” The Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Dr. Irwin Goldstein, echoed the president’s remarks: “I look forward to working with Dr. Bushrui over the coming years, to the promise and opportunities which the Bahá’í Chair brings to our campus and to our pursuit of a peaceful

world, a world free of violence and filled with mutual respect and appreciation for the contributions of all people.”

These sentiments laid the foundation for a rich and fruitful involvement of the Bahá'í Chair in the life of the university, one that has yielded fruits in the lives of countless students, in a campus community enriched through its commitment to diversity, and in a growing network of relationships with like-minded organizations, institutions and scholars throughout the world who are committed to working toward a peaceful and just world order. Professor Azar did not live to see the realization of this vision: he passed away in 1991. The Bahá'í community honors the memory of Dr. Azar and acknowledges a debt of gratitude to his vision and commitment to the cause of peace.



This capacity to engage students in a process of learning that far transcended the particulars of a degree or career and delved to the roots of human motivation and values has been perhaps the Chair's greatest, though most intangible, achievement.



# 2

TEACHING FROM THE HEART

The Bahá'í Chair has been first and foremost a teaching chair. The atmosphere of learning can be judged from a remark that was often heard from Dr. Bushrui: "I teach my students and I learn from them all the time." This genuine concern for each student as a human being and the embrace of each of them in a common pursuit of high ideals and moral excellence has become a hallmark of the Chair. One student wrote: "To visit Professor Bushrui is to be asked about my family, my professional and personal pursuits, and whether I am truly happy. Each discussion covers the state of affairs in both the global community and my individual life. He inspires reflection and offers guidance."

Another student wrote to the Chair to relate his difficulty in finding a passionate mission in life: "I came to college naively expecting that my life calling would proclaim itself in a flourish of trumpets. Here! This is what you want to do with your life. Now, everything is worthwhile. Now, life has meaning. Wow, I was wrong!...Why can't I be as impassioned and ardent as you, Mr. Bushrui? ... Well, you are substantive proof that maybe someday I will be... I might need to talk with you a little more, though. Next time I will bring a pen and paper. Thanks for coming to chat with me. Thanks."

This capacity to engage students in a process of learning that far transcended the particulars of a degree or career and delved to the roots of human motivation and values has been perhaps the Chair's greatest, though most intangible, achievement. As one indicator of this success, the Bahá'í Chair professor was chosen in 1999 as "teacher of the year" by the University of Maryland's Parents' Association.

On the academic side, the Chair saw as its first and immediate task the need to develop a survey course on world religions that would lay the scholarly foundations for a global

ethic. The course, "The Spiritual Heritage of the Human Race," was first offered in the fall of 1993 and has become a regular part of the university Honors Program. The course studies religion from the perspective that humanity has a common spiritual heritage and examines the teachings and doctrines of the world's religions in the context of the historical period and culture where they appeared. The Chair has developed the textbook for the course by involving the students in an intense collaborative effort. By mapping the shared terrain among the religions, students have worked toward a global code of ethics that incorporates the best of humanity's common spiritual heritage.

In the professor's mind, teaching a global ethic entailed the grave responsibility of becoming a living example of the principles studied. He cemented the point, as he often did, by citing a pithy Arabic aphorism: "If I don't have this in my pocket, how can I give it to you?" The professor set the example by purposefully creating encounters and opportunities for intensive dialogue and learning. One year, for example, as part of the "Spiritual Heritage" course, the Chair collaborated with Pax World Service and the Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies to host a dialogue with renowned Rabbi Robert J. Marx on the shared cultural heritage of the Arab and Jewish people. The two scholars discussed the seminal stories and events contained in both the Torah and the Qu'ran, and explored how limited and partial understandings had bred resentment and suspicion. Their empathy and warmth toward each other's tradition escalated until the two spontaneously embraced to the applause of the audience, which numbered some 250.

The Chair also continually sought opportunities to involve students in real-world learning situations that required them to embody

the core ethical values of tolerance, respect, openness and appreciation for the value of the “other.” One outstanding example was the Fourth International Dialogue on the Transition to a Global Society held on the College Park campus in 1995. The professor had served on the coordinating committee of the initial dialogue, held in Switzerland in 1990 as a combined effort of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Club of Rome, the Vienna Academy for the Study of the Future, Landegg Academy, and other world organizations and centers of higher learning.

The theme of the Fourth International Dialogue was “Divisive Barbarity or Global Civilization: the Ethical Dimensions of Science, Art, Religion and Politics,” and it was organized by the Bahá’í Chair under the auspices of UNESCO and in collaboration with more than twenty outstanding institutions from the United States, Europe and Asia. To prepare the campus for hosting such a high-level dialogue, the Chair and the Department of History designed a new course on “The Transition to a Global Society,” which examined the ethical dimensions of globalization in such areas as the environment, technology, governance and human rights. At the end of the course, the entire class participated in a panel discussion to share their perspectives with the distinguished leaders gathered at the Fourth International Dialogue.

This line of inquiry was further extended in 2002, when the Chair helped design a new undergraduate honors course entitled “Global Ethics: Confronting the Major Issues.” The course was designed to challenge students to think about issues of right and wrong, as well as personal and professional responsibility, in current events and in their day-to-day lives. The Chair is responsible for teaching the first five sessions of the course, addressing such questions as “where do notions of right and

wrong come from?” and “what is the role of religion and spirituality in developing systems of values and guidelines for moral behavior?” The published proceedings of the Fourth International Dialogue are used as readings for the course, and as part of this course the Chair has organized interfaith panels where representatives of the major religions give personal reflections on how their faith informs their approach to personal and societal ethics, particularly in the age of globalization.

Over the years the Bahá'í Chair has become a visible presence on campus and a valued partner in the university's Diversity Initiative, a multi-year effort to promote civility, tolerance and a cohesive social atmosphere on a campus that encompasses more than 30,000 students from virtually every nation, culture and ethnic background.



# 3

PROMOTING UNITY IN DIVERSITY  
ON CAMPUS

Over the years the Bahá'í Chair has become a visible presence on campus and a valued partner in the university's Diversity Initiative, a multi-year effort to promote civility, tolerance and a cohesive social atmosphere on a campus that encompasses more than 30,000 students from virtually every nation, culture and ethnic background. The Chair's engagement in campus life has been evident in its annual lecture series; in the numerous high-profile conferences, dialogues, artistic presentations and other events it has sponsored; and in its close collaboration with academic and administrative units on campus on groundbreaking initiatives to apply spiritual and ethical perspectives in novel ways. Examples of the Chair's rich cultural and academic contributions to the campus community include:

### “Once Empires Fade” Conference

In 1994, the Chair cosponsored the conference “Once Empires Fade: Religion, Ethnicity and the Possibilities for Peace” with the Department of History and the Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies. Conference participants included students from many disciplines and scholars from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. The eminent philosopher and anthropologist Ernest Gellner delivered a keynote address reflecting on the political vigor of Islam and the collapse of communism as demonstrations that the sacred cannot be removed from public life. Ambassador Paul-Marc Henry, one of France's most illustrious diplomats, spoke of the “loss of soul” afflicting Western Civilization as reminiscent of the *tedium vitae* that led to the collapse of the Roman Empire. More than 20 wide-ranging workshops covered such topics as the Albanian perspective on the Balkan conflict; the interplay of Islam and nationalism in Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan; the evolution of Gandhian

thought in India; and the aftereffects of the Indian uprising in the Mexican state of Chiapas. The conference also highlighted the important role of the arts in fostering new insights and levels of understanding. Artistic presentations included a joint performance by Arab and Jewish musicians, emotionally charged and highly symbolic of the shared heritage of all Semitic peoples; an evening of poetry and performance art; and an exhibit of contemporary African-American sculpture. The Bahá'í Chair professor contributed a reading of selections from the works of Kahlil Gibran interspersed with biographical vignettes that portrayed a man of true originality, who bridged East and West to arrive at a perennially valid expression of universal human values.

### Conference on the Advancement of Women

As part of its focus on gender and social justice, the Chair organized an international conference on “The Advancement of Women and Men in a Global Civil Society” in 2001 in cooperation with the Department of Women's Studies, Women in International Security, and other partners. The conference examined the challenge of reconciling universal human rights with culture-specific norms that affect the lives of women. Panel discussions and workshops addressed labor and economic rights, violence against women, asylum, abortion rights and questions of security and disarmament, as well as corporate social responsibility, the role of women in electoral politics, youth perspectives on gender equity, global-local organizing and the politics of knowledge, and community-building and leadership.

## Center for Teaching Excellence

The Chair has carried on fruitful collaboration with a variety of other university departments and offices. In 1998, for example, the Chair cosponsored an education summit with the university's Center for Teaching Excellence on best practices in higher education and model programs for teacher training. The Bahá'í Chair professor delivered the keynote address on "Teaching for Diversity, Unity and Human Values," and he encouraged one of his students to develop and chair a dialogue for educators, students and community leaders to discuss ways to infuse ethics and multicultural understanding into the Business School curriculum. The Chair was also involved in the Annual Equity Conference sponsored by the university's Office of Student Affairs. The Bahá'í Chair professor delivered the keynote address in 2001 on "The Unity of Vision and Ethic: Values in the Workplace."

## Center for Heritage Studies

The Chair has worked with the university's Center for Heritage Studies on initiatives to utilize cutting edge academic research to advance interreligious dialogue and reconciliation. In 2001, for example, the Chair and the Center brought Dr. Ann Killebrew, an archeologist working in Israel, to the campus to discuss her efforts to promote archeology and tourism in the ancient and multicultural city of Akka. The significance that this city holds for Jews, Christians, Muslims and Bahá'ís makes it a microcosm of the global struggle to develop "techniques of togetherness" by building on a shared heritage.

## Annual Lecture Series

Under its annual lecture series, the Chair has brought a series of international luminaries to campus, all of whom have addressed major issues facing humanity from the perspective of global values and ethics. The Bahá'í Chair professor launched the lecture series in 1994 with his inaugural lecture, "Retrieving our Spiritual Heritage: The Challenge for Our Time." The lecture called on the university community to recognize all religions as the common birthright of humanity and to evolve from this heritage a global code of ethics as an essential step toward world peace. The lecture was also the occasion for the donation of an extensive collection of Bahá'í literature in English, Arabic and Persian from the Bahá'í World Centre and the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of France, Switzerland, the United States, the United Kingdom, India and Lebanon.

Other lecturers have included Judge Dorothy Nelson of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, who spoke on alternative forms of dispute resolution; former President of Lebanon Amine Gemayel, on religion, conflict resolution and leadership; Judge John Noonan, a senior federal judge, on the problems of religious liberty; Patricia Locke, a MacArthur Fellow and authority on educational issues affecting indigenous peoples, on indigenous women's perspectives on unity; and Lord St. John of Bletso, on environmental ethics and public policy.

The Bahá'í Chair has cultivated and nurtured close working relationships with a broad network of top institutions, organizations and scholars working toward international peace and reconciliation, bringing international recognition and attention to the University of Maryland in this field.



4

A GLOBAL NETWORK FOR PEACE

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## The Dialogue of Civilizations

The U.N. General Assembly declared 1998 as the "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations." In doing so, according to an official U.N. statement,

the assembly rejected the concept of a "Clash of Civilizations" which is based on the notion that inter-civilizational understanding is impossible. The General Assembly expressed its firm determination to facilitate just such a dialogue, which is aimed at increasing mutual understanding and tolerance among peoples of different cultural backgrounds, through an active exchange of ideas, visions and aspirations.

Since it was founded, the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace has designed many of its activities to facilitate a dialogue among civilizations. In addition to the initiatives described in this section, the Chair's publications have reflected a strong interest in inter-civilizational dialogues. The monograph entitled *The Spiritual Foundation of Human Rights*, for example, traces the emergence of the modern concept of human rights and its antecedents in the teachings of the world's religious traditions. Two of the Chair's recent books seek to share with a global audience the perennial philosophy as represented in different cultural traditions: *The Wisdom of the Irish* (forthcoming) and *The Wisdom of the Arabs* (2002), a selection of sayings, aphorisms, parables, and proverbs from the vast field of Arabic literature.

## The Temenos Academy for Integral Studies

As a Senior Fellow of the Temenos Academy for Integral Studies, a prestigious cultural institution that operates under the patronage of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, Professor Bushrui has delivered a series of lectures in London over the past 15 years on a variety of topics, including Arabic, English, and Irish literatures; interfaith dialogue; the culture of peace; the dialogue of civilizations; the environment; and ethics and moral education. In 2000, 2001 and 2003, he was invited to deliver addresses at the House of Lords. In June 2001, the Temenos Academy invited him to deliver its annual L.M. Svinghi-Temenos Interfaith Lecture on the subject of interreligious reconciliation, intercultural dialogue, and the role of literature and the arts in producing understandings that lead to peace. In addition, the Temenos Academy and the Prince of Wales Foundation recently published the professor's paper "Environmental Ethics" in a special volume entitled *The Environment and the Sacred*.

## HRH The Prince of Wales

As an outgrowth of his association with the Temenos Academy, Professor Bushrui had the privilege of meeting privately with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales in July 2002 and again in October 2003. In these meetings, His Royal Highness emphasized the importance of relations between Islam and the West in the wake of the September 11 attacks and stressed the urgent need for a dialogue among civilizations. The Bahá'í Chair professor suggested to His Royal Highness that it would be wonderful for his own voice to be heard in Arabic and offered to translate some of his essays into Arabic. Plans are now underway for a book entitled *The Prince Speaks*, which will appear first in English and subsequently in Arabic, Persian and other languages. The chapters will cover a variety of topics, including agriculture and the environment; architecture and the built environment; medicine and health; education; and, most especially, religion and traditional thought, including issues that relate to a multi-cultural society and the relationship between Islam and the West. The honor of publishing the work has been granted to Professor David Cadman, a senior advisor to His Royal Highness and former director of the Prince's Foundation, and the Bahá'í Chair professor.

## The Temple of Understanding

In 1991, the Bahá'í Chair professor was invited to join the board of directors of The Temple of Understanding, a global interfaith organization based in New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine established under the auspices of, among others, H.H. the XIVth Dalai Lama, Thomas Merton, Jawaharlal Nehru, Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Albert Schweitzer. In 2003, the organization awarded the professor its Juliet Hollister Award for exceptional service to interfaith understanding, particularly in recognition of his efforts to inspire young people to explore interfaith studies in an environment of mutual respect and understanding. Previous recipients have included Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan; The Very Reverend James Parks Morton; His Holiness Sri Swami Satchidananda; Maestro Ravi Shankar; Henry Luce III; Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, President Nelson Mandela, Dr. Wangari Maathai, and Dr. Thomas Berry.

## The Club of Budapest and the Planetary Ethics Alliance

In 1995, Ervin Laszlo, President of the Club of Budapest, offered the Bahá'í Chair professor Creative Membership in the Club of Budapest, an honor "reserved for no more than 66 exceptionally creative and dedicated individuals from all over the world." He later invited the professor to become a Founding Member of a new Planetary Ethics Alliance. This network of diverse organizations is devoted to catalyzing and facilitating the evolution of "planetary ethics," a moral framework that is

globally conscious and responsible to human needs. Composed of such groups as the Center for Partnership Studies, the Goi Peace Foundation, the Master's Group, the Parliament of the World's Religions, and Sister Cities International, the Alliance is organizing projects and partnerships that promote ethical solutions to global problems.

## The Global Dialogue Initiative

In September 2001, a major international conference, "The Human Condition in the New Century," was held to launch the Global Dialogue Initiative, an initiative directed by Mr. Andrey Bykov, the Russian Government's International Coordinator for Nuclear Disarmament Projects. Mr. Bykov invited the Bahá'í Chair to become a Founding Member of the enterprise. The Global Dialogue Initiative's manifesto, *A Call for Human Dialogue*, which had been signed by more than 60 eminent personalities, including Professor Bushrui, was formally presented at the conference. The document outlines some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity at the present time. The conference focused on specific actions that can be taken to advance global security and human prosperity, including the definition of specific measures needed to dispose of a large portion of the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States.

## The International Academy for Human Sciences and Culture

Since the year 2000, the Bahá'í Chair professor has been the keynote speaker and guest of honor at a series of annual seminars organized by the International Academy for Human Sciences and Culture in Walenstadt, Switzerland, with the official endorsement of local government authorities in Switzerland. These conferences have examined themes such as a culture of peace (2000), the dialogue among civilizations (2001), education and learning in the twenty-first century (2002), and love in poetry and psychotherapy (2003). Typically, presentations are offered from the fields of psychology, education, literature, history, sociology, and the arts. The programs attract people from all walks of life including students, professionals, artists, and politicians. The seminars, furthermore, are themselves experiments in multiculturalism in that each session is conducted either in English or German with a simultaneous translation into the other language.

## The Association for Bahá'í Studies

In September 2003, the Bahá'í Chair professor delivered the prestigious Balyuzi Memorial Lecture before some 1,500 scholars from the United States, Canada and other countries gathered in San Francisco at the annual conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies (ABS). Inaugurated in 1980, the annual Balyuzi Lecture is given by a distinguished Bahá'í scholar or prominent Bahá'í personality. The theme of the ABS conference was "Religion and Community in a Time of Crisis." The address by the Bahá'í Chair professor was entitled "The Opening of the Academic Mind: The Challenges Facing a Culture in Crisis." Speaking on the state of institutions of higher learning in today's world, the Bahá'í Chair professor said that it was imperative to reform the Academy so that it could "serve the most noble of all goals: to instruct and provide the young with an education concerned with character formation and not the mere acquisition of qualifications." The professor spoke of the necessity of restoring a balance in all scholarly activities between mind and spirit and between natural and divine philosophy.

## Dialogue Between Islam and the West

In the wake of the events of September 11, the Bahá'í Chair has been approached by agencies of the U.S. Government for advice and collaboration in fostering people-to-people contacts and cultural understanding between the United States and the Arab and Muslim worlds. For example, in January 2002 the U.S. Department of State included the Bahá'í Chair in the itinerary of a high-level delegation of professors, writers, journalists and artists from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Bahá'í Chair received the delegation and hosted a discussion of such matters as interreligious dialogue, intercultural communication, and how to construct new mechanisms of peace. Also discussed at the request of the members of the delegation was the status of the Bahá'í Faith and its contributions to promoting world peace, a significant instance of positive Bahá'í-Muslim dialogue.

Also at the request of the State Department, in February 2004 the Bahá'í Chair professor chaired a panel on interfaith relations before an audience of approximately eighty students from Egypt, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and other countries. Held at the National 4-H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, the panel consisted of distinguished representatives from six world religions who offered an introductory presentation on their faith community. These presentations marked the first time that many of the students in attendance had been exposed to diverse religious perspectives. During the discussion session, the panelists spoke in unanimous support of the religious freedom and diversity found within the United States.

## Address at the European Parliament

On June 11, 2003, Professor Bushrui delivered a major address on "The Ethics of Globalization" at the European Parliament in Brussels. The audience was composed of elected members of the European Parliament, diplomats, delegates from cultural organizations, scholars, and members of the general public. Mrs. Jean Lambert, a Member of the European Parliament from Britain, responded to the speech by commenting: "It is indeed refreshing to hear the Professor remind us of those eternal values of the spirit, especially now that we are formally inaugurating our European constitution." The text of the address was printed in an edition of 5,000 copies, and every member of the Parliament received a copy of the address at its meeting in Strasbourg in early February 2004.

## Address at the Library of Congress

On January 30, 2001, the Bahá'í Chair professor spoke at the Library of Congress on the subject of "Globalization and the Bahá'í Community in the Muslim World." The symposium featured two panels composed of distinguished academics, journalists and international civil servants who shared their perspectives on globalization and its effects on religious and ethnic minorities in the Muslim world. He presented a revised version of this paper, titled "The Bahá'í International Community and Globalization," at the April 2001 meeting of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

## CIDCM panel on the ethics of globalization

In 2002, the Chair gave a presentation on “Ethics and Humanity after 9/11” at a high-level workshop organized by the Center for International Development and Conflict Management to address the impact of the September 11 events on the US role in international affairs and on the processes of globalization. Participants included representatives of the Office of the UN Secretary General, the US Agency for International Development, the National Academy of Sciences, the United Nations Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Henry Stimson Center, as well as scholars of conflict and peace studies from around the country. The professor stressed that the primary ethical challenge facing the world is to reconcile and harmonize the worldviews of science and reason with those of faith and religion. “It is in this reconciliation that superstition, fanaticism and extremism can be avoided in any religious system,” he said. “And again, it is in this reconciliation that the scientific endeavor can be raised to a higher level of moral and ethical commitment, based on a recognition of the spiritual nature of Man.”

This sample of the Bahá'í Chair's diverse activities illustrates the Chair's holistic approach to international affairs, which recognizes that relations among countries consist not only of political and economic relationships, but also of interactions between cultures, peoples and religions. The strongest legacy that emerges from the past ten years is the Chair's success in integrating the perspectives of the arts, faith, culture and ethics into the empirical, social scientific study of governance and conflict. Clearly the world stands in need of pragmatic arrangements for security and coexistence among the nations, but such arrangements can never lead to peace unless they engage the heart. Peace springs from a spiritual or moral attitude that must be cultivated through education, and this task has been and continues to be the Bahá'í Chair's primary mission.

“We are writing to let you know that you have been selected as a recipient of the 2003 Juliet Hollister Awards for your exceptional service to interfaith understanding. We would be delighted if you would accept this honor.”

The Temple of Understanding, 2003



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AWARDS RECEIVED BY  
THE BAHÁ'Í CHAIR FOR WORLD PEACE

The following is a selected list of awards and honors received by the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace.

Juliet Hollister Award, presented to Professor Suheil Bushrui by the Temple of Understanding for exceptional service to interfaith understanding (see section on “The Temple of Understanding” for a full description).

First Interfaith Education Award, presented to the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace by the Temple of Understanding.

Life Achievement Award, presented to Professor Bushrui by the Alumni Association of the American University of Beirut.

Outstanding Faculty Award, presented to Professor Bushrui by the University of Maryland Parents' Association.

Maryland Governor's Citation, presented to Professor Bushrui for excellence in education.

Silver Medal of Merit, presented to Professor Bushrui by the Vatican-sponsored Military and Religious Order of Constantine and St. George for services to Christian-Muslim understanding.

Lebanese Order of Merit, presented to Professor Bushrui by the Government of Lebanon for work on conflict resolution, intercultural reconciliation, and the life and legacy of Kahlil Gibran.



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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF THE  
BAHÁ'Í CHAIR FOR WORLD PEACE

The Bahá'í Chair has published a number of books and monographs and contributed several essays and book chapters to other publications, including:

“The Ethics of Globalization: A Bahá'í Perspective.” Address delivered at the European Parliament in Brussels on June 11, 2003. Paris: Librairie Bahá'íe, 2004.

*The Wisdom of the Irish* (forthcoming) to be published as part of a series (The Wisdom of the Jews, The Wisdom of the Hindus, etc.) in honor of the UN's International Year of the Dialogue of Civilizations.

*The Wisdom of the Arabs* (2002 Oneworld Publishers of Oxford, England), a selection of sayings, aphorisms, parables, and proverbs from the vast field of Arabic culture and civilization.

*Essays on Hinduism*, a comprehensive overview of the Hindu Faith, its history, evolution and current development by Dr. Karan Singh, former Indian Ambassador to the United States, member of the Club of Rome, and director of the Auroville Foundation.

*Alternative Forms of Conflict Resolution: A Pathway to Peace*, by Judge Dorothy Nelson (originally delivered as the second Bahá'í for World Peace Annual Lecture on May 15, 1995).

*Divisive Barbarity or Global Civilization: The Ethical Dimensions of Science, Art, Religion, and Politics*, edited by Professors Miles L. Bradbury and Suheil Bushrui, a collection of essays and addresses presented at The Fourth International Dialogue on the Transition to a Global Society, held at the University of Maryland at College Park in October 1995.

*The Style of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, by Suheil Bushrui, a study of the original Arabic text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book in Bahá'í scripture.

*Retrieving our Spiritual Heritage: A Challenge for Our Time*, by Suheil Bushrui, the inaugural lecture of the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace, delivered at the University of Maryland on March 3, 1994.

*The Spiritual Foundation of Human Rights*, by Suheil Bushrui, a 1998 monograph that traces the emergence of the modern concept of human rights and its antecedents in the teachings of the world's religious traditions.

Book chapter on “Environmental Ethics: A Bahá'í Perspective” in *Ecology: A Sacred Trust*, published by the Temenos Academy in 2002.

Book chapter on “Education as Transformation: A Bahá'í Model of Education for Unity” (with James Malarkey) in *Education as Transformation: Religious Pluralism, Spirituality, and a New Vision for Higher Education in America*, Peter Lang, New York, 2000.

Book chapter on “World Peace and Interreligious Understanding” in *Peace Education: Contexts and Values*, Edizioni Pensa MultiMedia, Lecce (Italy), 1999.

## **Glen Fullmer**

Glen Fullmer began serving the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace as a volunteer writer and researcher in 1993 while working toward a Master's degree in journalism at the University of Maryland. He has worked as a writer, editor and press officer in the non-profit sector, including stints as copy editor at the Hungarian State News Agency in Budapest and editor of Elections Today, a trade magazine for election officials published by the International Foundation for Election Systems.

## **The University of Maryland**

The University of Maryland is the flagship institution of the University System of Maryland System (USM). As the comprehensive public research university for the State of Maryland and the original 1862 land grant institution in Maryland, the University of Maryland has the responsibility within the USM for serving as the State's primary center for graduate study and research, advancing knowledge through research, providing high-quality undergraduate instruction across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, and extending service to all regions of the state.

## **CIDCM**

The Center for International Development and Conflict Management is a research and training institute within the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, studying the most pressing problems of our time—namely, peace and development. The staff of CIDCM, composed of university faculty, visiting scholars, and graduate researchers, study international and intercommunal conflicts in Asia, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, and explore ways to resolve conflict in the world today. The Center has acquired a unique specialty in applied conflict resolution, bringing together representatives of conflicting parties to engage in face-to-face discussions on ways to move from war to peace.

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