



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maitripa College Website: www.maitripa.org

Conference Website: www.bridgingwisdoms.net

September 9, 2008

WORLD PEACE BEGINS WITH INNER PEACE: MAITRIPA COLLEGE IN PORTLAND, OREGON TO HOST INTERFAITH CONFERENCE: “BEARING WITNESS, BRIDGING WISDOMS: A BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE ON CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE AND SOCIAL ACTION.”

PORTLAND, OR. Dr. Robert Thurman, professor of religion from Columbia University, and Dr. Marcus Borg, professor of religion from Oregon State University, two major figures from Buddhist and Christian spiritual traditions, will headline a two-day conference hosted by Maitripa College at Portland State University from October 11-12, 2008. Joined by a distinguished panel of spiritual leaders and social activists, participants will explore the link between prayer and action from the perspective of their respective faith traditions – an especially-timely topic in today’s political and social climate.

“Our mission at Maitripa is to offer educational and practical opportunities for our students to integrate contemplative practice and engaged social action,” said Yangsi Rinpoche, the Founder and President of Maitripa College in Portland. “For this reason, we are extremely fortunate to be able to introduce two highly influential figures - Dr. Thurman and Dr. Borg – who have dedicated their careers to this important topic, and to be able to also welcome local Portland leaders who will offer complementary perspectives.”

Conference sessions will include keynote addresses by the two main speakers, along with commentary from Panel Members and questions/answers from the participating audience on the topics of: “Social Action,” “Contemplation,” “Striking a Balance,” and “Where Do We Go From Here?” Music, verse and ritual from both traditions will enliven and inform the weekend’s dialogue.

The host of this event, Maitripa College is a revolutionary innovation in higher education - a graduate school integrating traditional scholarship with meditation and social service to create a transformative, holistic education for adults. Grounded in the Buddhist worldview, Maitripa College offers full- and part-time academic programs at the graduate level, as well as a regular course of Extension Program events for the general public including workshops, continuing education retreats, and meditation retreats. Maitripa College also houses a traditional Tibetan meditation hall and holds weekly Buddhist teachings from highly qualified teachers for the community.





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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES (see also www.bridgingwisdoms.net/speakers.html):

DR. ROBERT THURMAN: A recognized worldwide authority on religion and spirituality, Asian history, philosophy, Tibetan Buddhism, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Robert Thurman is an eloquent advocate of the relevance of Eastern ideas to our daily lives. He was named one of *Time* magazine's 25 most influential Americans and has been profiled by *The New York Times* and *People Magazine*. Presently, Thurman is the chair of Religious Studies at Columbia University.

DR. MARCUS BORG: Marcus J. Borg holds the Hundere Chair in Religion and Culture in the Philosophy Department at Oregon State University. Internationally known in both academic and church circles as a biblical and Jesus scholar, he is the author of sixteen books, including *Jesus: A New Vision* (1987) and the best-seller *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (1994). Described by *The New York Times* as "a leading figure in his generation of Jesus scholars," he has appeared on NBC's "Today Show" and "Dateline," PBS's "Newshour," ABC's "Evening News" and "Prime Time" with Peter Jennings, NPR's "Fresh Air" with Terry Gross, and several National Geographic programs.

PANEL PARTICIPANTS: Jan Chozen Bayes, Abbot, Great Vow Zen Monastery; Clatskanie, OR; Kyogen Carlson, Abbot, Dharma Rain Zen Center; Portland, OR; Venerable Zachoeje Rinpoche, Geshe Lharampa, Spiritual Director, Emaho Foundation; Scottsdale, AZ; Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell: Senior Minister, First Unitarian Church; Portland, OR; Timothy Travis: Bridge City Friends Meeting; Social Activist, Child Abuse & Juvenile Delinquency Attorney, Portland, OR; Mark Waller: Maitripa College Board of Directors, Entrepreneur, Founder of BridgeWorks Capital; Portland, OR.

YANGSI RINPOCHE: Geshe Lharampa, President & Professor of Buddhist Studies, Maitripa College, Rinpoche trained in the traditional Tibetan Buddhist monastic system for over twenty-five years, and in 1995 graduated with the highest degree of Geshe Lharampa from Sera Je Monastery in South India. He then completed his studies at Gyume Tantric College, and, in 1998, came to the West. He is the author of *Practicing the Path: A Commentary on the Lamrim Chenmo*.

JAMES BLUMENTHAL, PhD: Associate Professor, Buddhist Studies, Maitripa College; Associate Professor of Buddhist Philosophy, Oregon State University is the author of *The Ornament of the Middle Way: A Study of the Madhyamaka Thought of Santaraksita* and editor of *Incompatible Visions: South Asian Religions in History and Culture* in addition to numerous articles on Buddhist thought and practice. He translated Nagarjuna's *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* for His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2004.

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