

New York, September 19th 2008

Since our founding in 2002, the Global Peace Initiative of Women has been focusing on bringing the fruits of contemplative practice to conflict areas, helping women, young people, and religious leaders to connect with one another and feel the compassion that can help them truly know and care for the other.

In our work, we have come to realize that a deeper transformation is needed in the hearts and minds of people around the world. We must move beyond interreligious dialogues and peace dialogues and experience a deeper knowing of our oneness as a human family, of our essential interconnection and our common Divine source.

A unifying spiritual effort is needed.

We must move beyond religious divisions and separation so that we can become a more inclusive world community, knowing that no one religion, culture or people is superior to another or has an exclusive hold on truth.

We must come to balance the masculine and feminine energies -- the yin and yang, shiva and shakti. We must balance the wisdom of the West and East, the material and spiritual.

Material development has brought us to this point in civilization but unless we develop equally our spiritual nature, we will not be able to meet the challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, poverty and conflict.

Women can lead this effort because our nature is to be embracing, inclusive and holistic.

When we gathered in Jaipur, India, in March, 2007, we did so with the purpose of highlighting the role the Divine Feminine can play in helping to bring about the transformation in the consciousness of people around the world. This feminine energy is needed to bring more balance and help us shift the priorities of our communities.

Many people in Jaipur -- both women and men -- experienced the power of this feminine energy and understood how it can guide the human community forward at this critical time. We must bring the energy generated in Jaipur to other parts of the world, and thus we are planning to gather in the US in November and in several other countries in 2009. Great, unified spiritual effort is needed now if we are to come together as a world community in a new way -- and create a new vision for our future based on the spiritual principles of love, compassion, sharing and respect.

We hope you can join this effort.

I am happy that this work is now being embraced in Italy as well through the efforts of the Rev. Doju D. Freire and the strong delegation of women who came to Jaipur with her.

*Dena Merriam*

*Founder and Convener of The Global Peace Initiative of Women*