

I want to underscore that the Interfaith Council and the religious traditions associated with it unequivocally condemn the violence, hatred, bigotry, and perhaps just as importantly, the lies that were expressed by skinheads, Neo-Nazis, and white supremacists in Charlottesville this past weekend. Indeed, the so-called “theology” of these groups is repugnant to us all and an abomination to the idea of what is sacred, holy, and true. The various religious traditions working together in the Interfaith Council share a vision of what *is* sacred, holy, and true enshrined in what we know as the Golden Rule.

Hear the wisdom of our traditions.

In Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow human. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary. (Talmud)

In Christianity: All things that you would want others to do to you, you should do to them; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:1)

In Islam: No one of you is a believer until you desire for your brother or sister that which you desire for yourself (Sunnah)

In Confucianism: Do not do to others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no resentment against you, either in the family or in the state. (Analects 12:2)

In Buddhism: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. (Udana-Varga 5,1)

In Hinduism: This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you. (Mahabharata 5,1517)

In Baha’i: Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid on you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself. (Baha ullah, Gleanings)

In Sikhism: I am a stranger to no one and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all. (Guru Granth Sahib)

In Unitarian Universalism: We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. (Unitarian principle)

Clearly, such teachings must be heard and internalized by those who are filled with such fear and hatred if there is to be change in our world. Such teachings do not allow for discrimination toward and dismissal of another human being because they are of a different race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Indeed, our world will not know peace until we embody these truths in all our relationships. Thus, the Golden Rule creates a challenge for all of us. For we cannot simply see those with hateful viewpoints as beyond the pale, but we,

also, must respond toward them as we seek to be responded to. The Golden Rule applies to us as well. This does not mean that we sit idly by when violence or bigotry or the fear-that-drives-hatred expresses itself. Never. When evil rears its ugly head, we must respond. The Golden Rule does mean, however, that we must continue to work to hold ourselves, our friends, our neighbors, and those with whom we differ to a higher standard by speaking up, speaking out, and acting. Given the failure of moral leadership by our president, speech and action at this time is crucially important. Our presence here is one way to do that, and speech and action must continue beyond this gathering. We must continue to work to embody the Golden Rule. As my tradition notes in its baptismal rite by posing the following question to the congregation: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? Our response is: I will with God's help. May we also. With God's help.