

Pave the Way Foundation Urges All to Heed the Words of Pope Benedict XVI Words of Catholic Leader Reach Out to Jews, Muslims, and Other Religious People

New York, NY, August 21, 2005--Pave the Way Foundation, a non-sectarian organization committed to fighting extremism in the name of religion, calls upon all religious people of the world to listen to and heed the words of Pope Benedict XVI uttered in his address to World Youth Day attendees. In particular, Pave the Way Foundation urges all clergy to use the weekend of September 11th to denounce religious extremism and violence in the name of religion as the most positive healing address of the 9-11 commemorations likely to be offered.

The overwhelming tone of the Pontiff's speech was optimistic, offering a prayer for Muslims and calling upon all to affirm the values of mutual respect, solidarity and peace. At the same time he pointed out that those who instigate and plan terrorist attacks wish to create further hate, making use of all means, including religion, to oppose every attempt to build a peaceful, fair and serene life for all people.

Even as the Pope was issuing his declaration for the religions to combat extremism in their name, glimmers of hope are continuing to appear regarding Israel's disengagement in Gaza. In general, hateful incitement by clergy has been contained and limited suggesting that neither Israeli Jews nor Israeli Arabs want civil war or rampant extremism in this matter.

While the Western world has perceived it as government's duty to create civil societies and to form a common defense against terrorism, the Pope's remarks emphasize the obvious truth that religion must play an important role. Religious extremists threaten the lives and security of all people. The governments cannot effectively address the situation. Only the religions of the world, renouncing terrorism propagated in the name of faith, can truly bring hope to this troubled world.

The Pave the Way Foundation is dedicated to the certainty that religion can bring that hope and further, that gestures of good will can be a major first step to increasing understanding and improving attitudes, resulting in better relations between people of all religions. Pave the Way Foundation played the leading role in bringing over 150 Jewish leaders in January to thank Pope John Paul II for his historic gestures of goodwill.

Pope Benedict XVI has given this matter a sense of spiritual urgency that only a true religious man could. As the world prepares for yet another anniversary of 9-11, the significance of this message is even stronger. PTWF believes that members of all religions, and even non-religious people, can come together to reinforce positive acts of goodwill between the faiths. None of us can afford to be bystanders to the "clash of civilizations" but must be proactive to improve conditions. We believe that young people of every faith and creed want a future of hope and promise.

About Pave the Way Foundation

PTWF has a simple yet monumental goal – to enhance the relations between the world’s religions through gestures of good will and thereby embracing their similarities and savoring their differences. In today's world, some individuals try to achieve their agenda through violence, in the name of religion. To silently allow this to happen defames every faith. Our vision is that the unified voice of the world's great religious leaders condemning violence and promoting trust will pave the way to peace.

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