

OUR VISION:

We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect our universal human rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will supplant the law of force with the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION:

We are a membership organization working to build political will in the United States to achieve our vision. We do this by educating citizens about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform and strengthen the United Nations and other international institutions.

**“AN ESSENTIAL WORK FOR ALL WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH
THE FUTURE OF A NEW UN”**

Gail Hughes, President

The title is a quotation from the endorsement by Boutros Boutros-Gali, the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, of a newly published book by our own Joseph Schwartzberg, *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2013.

Blueprint for a Transformed UN: In the book, Joe draws upon a lifetime of research and experience to set forth his designs to *transform* (rather than merely *reform*) the United Nations in ways that would make it more democratic, and thereby more credible and effective. Among his suggestions are systems of weighted voting in the General Assembly and other key UN agencies; eliminating the veto power in a reconstituted Security Council of twelve regional members; establishing a World Parliamentary Assembly (WPA); peacekeeping through a standing UN Peace Corps; peace-building via a UN Administrative Reserve Corps, creating Civil Society Coordinating Councils to serve as channels of communication with ordinary citizens; strengthening the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with expanded environmental concerns and redesignating it as the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (ESEC); strengthening the human rights and judicial systems; and greater roles for non-governmental organizations ((NGOs). He also points out correctable redundancies among UN agencies, ways to better coordinate their activities, and means for greatly expanding UN funding. A useful chart depicts the infrastructure of the proposed system of global governance.

Presentation at Third Thursday Forum: At our January 16 Third Thursday Forum, Joe provided an overview of his ideas. Responding to a common concern, he noted that his proposals are not ‘utopian’. If implemented, they would not result in ‘ideal’ global institutions; but would, rather, establish *workable* ones. The five permanent members of the Security Council, while initially opposed to changes in the status quo, would ultimately be willing to give up their veto power in exchange for enhanced influence in the General Assembly (through weighted voting); and small nations members of the General Assembly would be willing to exchange the present one-nation/one-vote system for weighted voting because it will better serve their needs to have fewer votes in a system that actually works than to have more votes in passing non-binding resolutions that are ignored with impunity and scarcely matter.

Breadth, Depth, and Feasibility: The book includes detailed descriptions of the interrelated components of Joe’s proposed system of global governance, and provides a clear a rationale for each. Fernando Iglesias

comments on its *breadth* of analysis, saying that it is "...arguably, the most comprehensive attempt at combining the goal of a global democratic order and the realities of the existing international structure". Ronald Glossop applauds its *depth*, calling it "a masterpiece" with "...many well-reasoned and exhaustively documented specific recommendations." Harm de Blij calls it a "...challenging book" that "brims with *sensible and attainable* proposals to promote international cooperation..." (emphases added).

A Truly Interdisciplinary Work: What struck me most about Joe's book was its interdisciplinary nature. Unless one knew that Joe is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Geography at the University of Minnesota one would not likely guess that it was written by a geographer. When I delved into Joe's background, I discovered his association with many academic disciplines. His fieldwork in India doing research on the geography of the caste system overlaps the fields of sociology and anthropology; his monograph, *Occupational Structure and Level of Economic Development in India...*, draws upon economics and sociology; his *Historical Atlas of South Asia* and two volumes of the multi-volume *History of Cartography* earned him accolades from the American Historical Association; and his numerous works on the conflict in Kashmir integrate geography with sociology, political science, and international relations. Besides having spent more than four years in India doing research and teaching at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Joe spent three years as Director of the [University of] Minnesota Studies in International Development Program.

The above disciplines - geography, political science/IR, sociology, history, anthropology, and economics - are appropriately integrated into Joe's designs for a workable world. Attention also is given to psychology (especially the concepts of perception and credibility), ecology, and intercultural communication. Even mathematics is put to good use, with simple formulae provided to determine what weights should be assigned to the votes of member countries, etc.

Reflection of Global Perspectives by a World Citizen: My point here is that only an interdisciplinary 'renaissance person' with a global identity and global perspectives could have written this book. In a published interview with Eric Black, Joe said, "I attach great importance to wedding my concerns as a scholar to my sense of being a World Citizen". Since academia is artificially fragmented into discrete disciplines, it does not prepare students for world citizenship, and fails to give them the interdisciplinary tools to tackle interdisciplinary global problems. This is a concern that needs attention if we are to see other works of the caliber of Joe's book.

Format for Discussion and Action: Joe has not been content to publish academic works that sit on bookshelves. Rather, he publishes them to provide a concrete basis for sharing ideas and inspiring people to work together to create a better world.

Reflecting the "World Federalist" concept upon which our organization was founded, one of the goals of our Minnesota Chapter is to "promote world citizenship and global governance." Since Joe's proposals directly address that objective, we hope to organize a series of programs that explore different components of a transformed UN: weighted voting, a World Parliamentary Assembly, etc. Sessions will be held as Joe's schedule permits - watch for future announcements. In the meantime, please send your comments and feedback by phone, email, and/or regular mail.

If transforming the United Nations strikes you as 'pie in the sky', remember this quote from Nelson Mandela: "*It always seems impossible, until it is done.*"

You may order Joe's book from the Brookings Institution, c/o HFS, PO Box 50370, Baltimore, MD 21211-4370; phone 1-800-537-5487; Fax 410-516-8998; \$40, shipping included. Alternatively, you may Google *Transforming the United Nations System* and scroll down to Amazon for instructions on ordering at \$36. Best of all, you can come to one of our Third Thursday Global Issues Forums (see page 3) and get an inscribed copy from Joe at the discounted price of \$30 (25% off the list price) as long as supplies last.

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public.

Note: The March program will be at our usual time, on the third Thursday of the month; but, exceptionally, this year's April program will be on the third Wednesday and in a changed venue.

When: Thursday, March 20, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Where: Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church,
511 Groveland Ave (at Lyndale & Hennepin), Minneapolis. Park in church lot.

ONE WORLD OR NONE: WORLD RELIGIONS AND THE QUEST FOR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

It was once fashionable to anticipate the disappearance of religion as a factor in human affairs. Religion was regarded as residual superstition; a recurrent factor in armed conflict. John Dominic Crossan pointed to three factors dominating the world through much of human history: *“political oppression, economic exploitation and the religious validation of these.”* But in the late 20th and early 21st centuries revisionist viewpoints emerged. As Hans Kung observed (1984), *“world religions began to talk to one another.* Karen Armstrong's *The Great Transformation* (2006) traced the origins of world religions in the turbulent millennium prior to the Common Era; and the Judeo-Christian tradition rediscovered the eco-spirituality inherent in its scriptures. A flowering inter religious dialogue ensued, along with collaborative action for the sake of *tikkun olam*, the *“mending of the world”* in the Jewish tradition. Additionally, the common ethical core and origins of world faith traditions was documented. Finally, religions sensed a new spiritual connectedness to the whole of creation. Despite continuing tensions among religions, these developments bring a vast and influential constituency of the human community to the quest for a new globalism.

Presenter: The Reverend Dr. JAMES T. CHRISTIE

Dr. Christie is *Professor of Whole World Ecumenism and Dialogue Theology*, and former Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Winnipeg. He is a life-long ecumenist and pioneer in dialogue theology. He has held ministerial posts in Montreal, New York State, Toronto and Ottawa. His many international involvements include a visiting Fellowship at the International Islamic University in Malaysia and his services as an honorary Chieftain of the Igbo people of Nigeria. A past President of the Canadian Council of Churches, he has represented his country at numerous international conferences. He is a leader in the NGO movement for global democracy and for many years served as chairman of the Council of the World Federalist Movement / Institute for Global Policy.

When: Wednesday, April 16, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. (part of an all-day public conference beginning at 8:30 a.m.)

Where: Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota
West Bank campus, Minneapolis. Park in 19th Avenue ramp, with entrance off 3rd St. S.

GENOCIDE AND ITS AFTERMATHS: LESSONS FROM RWANDA

This program, of which Global Solutions MN is a co-sponsor, marks the 20th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide. For full details of program, please consult <http://hrp.cla.umn.edu/events/lessonsfromrwanda.html>.

Keynote speaker: ADAMA DIENG, UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide.

A native of Senegal, Mr. Dieng is a former board member of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and a former registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Previously, he was a personal assistant to the President of Senegal and the Legal Officer of Africa for the International Commission of Jurists (1982-89), then its Executive Secretary and Secretary General (1989-2000). He has worked in numerous capacities for the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, UNESCO, the Ford Foundation, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. He has published extensively in the fields of human rights and conflict resolution.

BOOK PROMOTION TOUR

I'm pleased to relate below a few details of an exciting, gratifying and tiring tour that I undertook from February 15 to March 1 of this year to promote my recently published book, *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*. My stops, in order, were Chicago, Amherst, Boston/Cambridge, New York, Philadelphia and Washington. In all, I gave ten talks and visited a bunch of offices and chatted with fellow travelers as well.

The talks were as follows: a) at U Mass, Boston, to a mature graduate seminar on international organization, all of whose had already read my book; b) to a group mainly consisting of human rights students at the J.F. Kennedy School at Harvard; c) to 35 or so intrepid souls at the Friends meeting house, who braved cold and driving snow to hear me; d) to the interns and other staff at the WFM HQ in New York; e) to a bunch of mainly old-timers at the home of Lucy Webster, the administrator of the Center for War/Peace Studies; f) to the UNA of Greater Philadelphia at the up-scale Water Works meeting place, with the gratifying result that their President ordered ten copies of my book for a study group to explore my ideas in depth; g) to Model UN students at Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges; h) to a mainly faculty group at GW University, presided over by Esther Brimmer, a former Under-secretary of State for International Organization Affairs; i) to the staff and other invitees at GlobalSolutions.org; and j) to an IR seminar at American U.

NGO and other organizational visits (often with old friends) included discussions with three Board members of WFA (yes, they still use that name) in Chicago; dinner with

Lois Barber, the supportive founder and Director of Earth Action in Amherst, who maintain an e-mail file of 5,000 or so parliamentarians all over the world; the Unitarian Universalist HQ in Boston; the Graduate Center of CUNY, largely to hear a speech about a new book by Tom Weiss, a distinguished UN scholar; Tim Barner, at the Friends Committee on National Legislation; the Better World Society / UNA; and the Fund for Peace.

I also visited the UN liaison offices of the following religious groups: Baha'is, Mennonites, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Soka Gakkais, Unitarian Universalists, and World Council of Churches.

Visits to governmental agencies included a warm and long meeting with the Swedish Ambassador to the UN, with an eye to future meeting with his predecessor, Jan Elliason, a former President of the UNGA and now UN Deputy SG for administration. In Washington I had two visits to the State Department, one with staff from the offices of International Organization Affairs and of Political Affairs; the other with the Office of the Geographer, an old friend.

Finally, I had a very encouraging visit with the Director of the Brookings Institution Press, the principal distributor of my book in the US, to discuss future publicity for the work and, possibly, issuing it as an e-book.

Prior to or during each of my visits, I provided my hosts with one or more copies of my book and was pleased by the enthusiasm with which it was received.

Joe Schwartzberg

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With our thoughts, we make our world. Our mind is in control and precedes our deeds . . . As long as space remains and as long as sentient beings remain, until then may I, too, remain and help dispel the misery of the world.

The Dalai Lama