

**Remarks at Luncheon with International Spiritual Leaders  
Premier Gordon Campbell  
April 18, 2004**

*Check Against Delivery*

Your Holiness the Dalai Lama; The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu; Professor Shirin Ebadi; Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi; and Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald – on behalf of all British Columbians, it is indeed a truly great pleasure to have you here in our city, in our province and in our country.

It is an honour to have each of you here with us to share with us your experience, your sense of the world and your commitment to the people who live on it.

On one level, your meetings here are a remarkable gathering of leaders, guides and mentors from so many different spiritual backgrounds. And, in a time when it seems differences in faith too often divide the world, your coming together provides a valuable lesson in itself.

But it seems to me there is another kind of faith that unites you: an unfaltering faith in humanity.

Through trouble and trial and turmoil, each of you has persevered with patience, optimism and a trust that the best of who we are will always prevail.

You remind us that wherever we stand in an often troubled world, we can always turn and find the hopeful face of peace beside us; that when our burdens weigh us down, we can always reach out and be lifted up by the kind hand of human compassion; and that even if we stumble on the path of progress it is a path that we do not travel alone but one we travel in the company of all humanity, regardless of borders or of beliefs.

As we walk that path together, we also have an opportunity to face the challenges we encounter together. And the best tool that we have to meet those challenges is the one you will be applying here over the next several days: education. Education in its purest form: exchanging, exploring and expanding ideas.

Each of you, in your own lives, holds up a light of example. You have demonstrated the power of ideas and the strength of your faith – and you are willing to share that strength with the world.

Many people will be listening and learning from your words and ideas over the next few days.

But most valuable of all, many people will undoubtedly be inspired by your trust in the innate potential of every man, woman, and child on the face of the planet. And that is the

greatest gift that any of us can share – inspiring others to unleash the power of their own imagination, compassion and humanity.

We live in a wonderful country and a great province. We are blessed with the strength of diversity and we are blessed with the strength of sharing by you coming together and joining us today.

On behalf of all British Columbians, I would like to say welcome and, most importantly, thank you.