

**„Our dialogue always starts with respecting difference.“**



## **Dr. William F. Vendley – Secretary General, *Religions for Peace***

A mere two years after William F. Vendley was named the new Secretary General of *Religions for Peace* (RfP) in 1994, he was confronted with a huge task: in the aftermath of the Srebrenica Massacre and during the siege of Sarajevo the international community was slow to react. Against this backdrop, Vendley gathered members of the affected religious communities. Together, they knocked on the doors of each single religious leader until they managed to get the four most important religious leaders of Bosnia to sit together at one table, with the aim of building a multi-ethnic and a peaceful society in Bosnia. To this day, this religious cooperation remains a model for many further peace efforts of RfP, which Vendley was able to support in countries such as Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka or Iraq. For 25 years, peace pioneer Vendley has been at the forefront of RfP, coordinating the activities and projects of the global multi-faith network in 90 national member associations and six regional networks. He is convinced that multi-religious efforts contribute a unique strength to peace processes, which support the activities of governments and institutions such as United Nations immensely.

## Vita

Vendley has his Ph.D. in systematic theology. He has served as Dean of the Doctor of Ministry of Arts in Theology program and Master of Arts in Theology Program at theological colleges. He is co-founder of the „Hope for African Children“ initiative and acts as consultant for several national governments with regards to religion and peace. Amongst others, he advised President Obama during his term and UNICEF on questions concerning global partnerships. Vendley also served on the Multi-religious Cooperation Task Force at the White House and is Co-chair of the State Department’s Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group. Vendley gives lectures and talks frequently at universities, the United Nations and NGO forums and serves on the boards of various organizations in the peacebuilding, multi-religious and political arenas. His efforts for human rights and peace processes have earned him numerous awards.

## Selected media excerpts

Dr. William F. Vendley, *The Guardian*, [Religious leaders are learning to be bilingual](#)  
Eric Roston, *Bloomberg*, [Behind the Scenes With the Pope's Secret Science Committee](#)  
*Religions for Peace*, [Religions for Peace Calls for Inclusion and Protection of Indigenous People](#)

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