

April 3, 2014 @ 7:00pm

MLK Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College
830 Westview Drive, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30314



ABOUT KAREN ARMSTRONG

[Karen Armstrong](#), Fellow at the Royal Society of Literature, is a British author and commentator known for her books on comparative religion. A former Roman Catholic religious sister, she went from a conservative to a more liberal and mystical Christian faith. Her work focuses on commonalities of the major religions, such as the importance of **compassion** and the **Golden Rule**. Armstrong received the [\\$100,000 TED Prize](#) in February 2008. She used that occasion to call for the creation of a [Charter for Compassion](#), which was unveiled the following year.



The **Charter for Compassion**, which appears below, is a document that transcends religious, ideological, and national differences. Supported by leading thinkers from many traditions, the Charter activates the Golden Rule around the world. The Charter is a cooperative effort to restore not only compassionate thinking but, more importantly, compassionate action to the center of religious, moral and political life. Compassion is the principled determination to put ourselves in the shoes of the other, and lies at the heart of all religious and ethical systems.

THE GANDHI, KING, IKEDA COMMUNITY BUILDERS PRIZE



On April 3, **Karen Armstrong** will receive the [Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize](#). This is the **highest honor** presented by Morehouse College for peace, reconciliation and non-violence. Peace is often characterized as a state of tranquility – a utopia free from conflict. The lives of **Gandhi, King and Ikeda** clearly demonstrate that rather than quiet stillness, peace is a product of vital and energetic life-activity altruistically aimed at "the good of all" – the community. Their endeavors further reveal that lasting results are born only when social movements are carried out by individuals who are embodying an internal, spiritual reformation. The Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders prize **symbolizes the tradition** these giants of humanity share and, it is hoped, will inspire and empower every person to take responsibility for the improvement of the human condition. Previous recipients include Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Coretta Scott King and Rev. Joseph Lowery to name a few.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. INTERNATIONAL CHAPEL AT MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

The [Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel](#) – the world’s most prominent religious memorial to Dr. King – is a unique, tangible metaphor of his World House concept. The Chapel building and plaza honor the memory and celebrate the legacy of Dr. King, Morehouse College’s most well-known alumnus, and Dr. Howard Thurman, our best-known interfaith theologian. Built in 1978 under President Hugh Morris Gloster, the Chapel seats 2501 (2,500 and always room for one more). The Chapel backdrop Features the 6,000-pipe Wendell P. Whalum organ. Hall of Honor includes 158 oil portraits of global leaders of the international civil and human rights movement. Our lobby is home to busts of Mahatma and Kasturbai Gandhi. The plaza is home to only bronze statue of Dr. King in Georgia and the Howard Thurman obelisk and crypt. The Dean’s Office and Library houses a 500+ collection of King related photos, artifacts and memorabilia.



THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPASSION lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the center of our world and put another there, and to honor the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

IT IS ALSO NECESSARY in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

WE THEREFORE CALL UPON all men and women to restore compassion to the center of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

WE URGENTLY NEED to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

COMPASSIONATE ATLANTA

[Compassionate Atlanta](#) is a grass roots movement that seeks to raise awareness about the benefits of compassionate action in the Greater Atlanta area. The **Compassionate Atlanta Organizing Committee**, which was formed in 2013, was instrumental in getting the City of Atlanta designated as a Compassionate City.

This important step was [taken on February 3, 2014](#) by the City Council of Atlanta and approved by Mayor Kasim Reed on February 12, 2014. In so doing, Atlanta became the second largest metropolitan area in the United States to become a compassionate city.

“A compassionate city is an uncomfortable city! A city that is uncomfortable when anyone is homeless or hungry. Uncomfortable if every child isn't loved and given rich opportunities to grow and thrive. Uncomfortable when any group anywhere in the world is marginalized or oppressed. Uncomfortable when as a community we don't treat our neighbors as we would wish to be treated.” ~ Karen Armstrong

PLEASE HELP US ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION

Our mission, now that Atlanta is officially a “compassionate city,” is to engage as many people as possible to join our movement and put **compassionate action** to work in our community. We also need our civic, corporate, educational and spiritual leaders to become **Champions of Compassion** in their respective organizations.

TEN WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

1. Sign the Charter for Compassion
2. Invite your friends to do the same
3. Encourage your company and other organizations to which you belong to do the same
4. Follow Compassionate Atlanta on Facebook
5. Subscribe to the Compassionate Atlanta Newsletter
6. Start a Compassion Conversation in your community
7. Have your company or other organization become a Charter Partner
8. Start a Compassionate Cities Campaign in your town or city
9. Make a financial donation to Compassionate Atlanta
10. Become a volunteer for Compassionate Atlanta



CompassionateATL.com