States. American religionists do not consider studying Islam or Buddhism as it is practiced within our borders, or of teaching our students how to learn from Muslims and Buddhists living in our hometowns.

In 1893, the World Parliament of Religions invited people from other parts of the world to come to Chicago to share perspectives and practices. By 1993, these guests had themselves become the hosts to the Second World Parliament of Religions. Only one hundred years later, fourteen host committees representing particular religious traditions had developed strong bases in the United States.

Using the CD-ROM, On Common Ground: World Religions in America, we can click on "Chicago" to learn about the history and diversity of religious communities in this city. The "Chicago" click brings numerous possibilities to the screen such as the Midwest Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temple built after World War II by Japanese-Americans released from internment camps; the first mosque built in the United States in nearby Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and in a suburb of Chicago, Bartlett, Illinois, the world headquarters of the Jains.

On Common Ground provides access to entire historical documents, quick-time movies exploring the perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds and connections to related websites and e-mail addresses.

Immigration

Integral to much of the information presented is the history of immigration in America. For example, if we set out to learn about Chinese and Indian religions in America, we might learn that 10% of the population in Montana in the 1890s was Chinese; that the large Sikh population in the Pacific Northwest is descended from railroad and lumber mill workers; and that there is a community of Mexican Hindus north of Fresno, California. These facts which provide a context for understanding the religious traditions also draw us into the history of the Asian communities as they settled into life in America.

In exploring the history of religious diversity in the United States, we learn that one way of dealing with diversity was "exclusion." While Americans publicly espoused the "melting pot" metaphor, various groups were in effect excluded from the "pot." On Common Ground provides access to a copy of The Exclusionary Act of 1882, along with other documents that chronicle the debate's history. Moving into current venues for this discussion, the program directs us to court cases, issues facing today's zoning boards, and incidents of violence and racism. Or we can follow the progress of local and regional interfaith councils as they address issues of diversity among their own groups. One complex but urgent social problem that is creating common ground among religious groups is the need to deal cooperatively with HIV/AIDS within their communities. As a result "serving the dying" has become an interfaith issue.

On Common Ground and the continuing research of the Pluralism Project offer instructive and fascinating tools for educating students, interested community groups, and us. The interactive multi-media approach allows us to examine the issues of religious pluralism at our own pace, and offers the opportunity to pursue these issues through different angles and to varying depths.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Sean Bell, CET Academic Programs

I just wanted to drop you a note and thank the ASIANetwork again for hosting such a great conference. Having been four years in a row, I'm constantly impressed by the quality of the discussions I encounter at ASIANetwork and the active interest in study abroad as an essential component to any good Asian Studies curriculum.

I've just modified our website's information for faculty and administrators to include a link to <www.asianetwork.org> for those teachers interested in strengthening their institutions' Asian Studies programs.

Editor's note: This fall, Bell is continuing his graduate studies at the University of Washington.

Karl Fields, University of Puget Sound

Let me commend all involved for the fine 1998 ASIANetwork Conference. It was my first, and it was very good.

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