

# Symposium promotes peace

Dozens gather at "Power of Prayer" event aimed at creating interfaith unity.

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The "Power of Prayer" drew more than 100 people Saturday at a symposium aimed at promoting peace and unity.

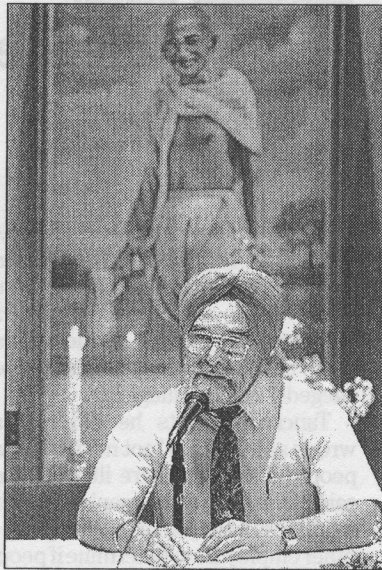
One of them was Helen Haller, who teaches world religion at Garces Memorial High School.

Haller wanted to see the annual Mahatma Gandhi Interfaith Symposium, held at Beale Memorial Library, before she recommends it to her second-semester high school juniors next year.

"I think it's wonderful that the group is looking for the common core that all religions share because there's so much misunderstanding in religion," she said. "I think the only way you can have peace is if we look at what we have in common."

The interfaith conference is held in memory of Gandhi's birthday, said Satish Gaitonde, one of the committee members who helped organized the event since its inception five years ago.

This would have been Gandhi's 133rd birthday, he said.



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**Gurcharan Singh spoke on the power of prayer in the Sikh religion as part of a panel discussion during the Mahatma Gandhi Interfaith Symposium Saturday morning at the Beale Memorial Library.**

"Mahatma Gandhi believed in the unity of all religions and all religions come to the same thing," said Naina Patel, also a member of the Gandhi Interfaith Symposium committee. "He

## Want to get involved?

People who are interested in planning next year's Mahatma Gandhi Interfaith Symposium can call Naina Patel at 664-8028 or Hansa Patel at 327-9154.

respected all of them. We're trying to bring that same philosophy to the public."

The panel of speakers and the religions represented included: Steve Vinson, Christianity; Naina Patel, Hinduism; Aiman Cassim, Islam; Robert Young, Judaism; Gurcharan Singh, Sikhism; and Delnaz Parabia, Zoroastrian. Dr. Mehta Viral served as the moderator.

Freddie Valero, a concert pianist and saxophonist in Bakersfield, saw the symposium as a means for people to share their beliefs and educate others who may not know about their faiths and practices.

Valero said he has traveled around the world as a musician and has felt the power of prayer.

"Nobody should wake up without it," he said. "The prayer of God is one of the most powerful things you can have in your life."

# PEACE