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President's Message

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Throughout 2023 and into 2024, the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations has been extremely busy in the furtherance of our vision. Here are some of the highlights:

The First World Congress

The first World Congress for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, entitled *Crossroads of Civilizations*, was held in Bucharest, Romania at Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University from July 3 to July 9, 2023. It was sponsored by three entities:

- The International Society for the Comparative Studies of Civilizations
- Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University of Romania
- The Asian Politics and History Association

The goal of the Congress was to provide a venue for scholars in the several fields of the comparative study of civilizations, cultural and social studies, history, and humanities to meet and exchange views. Innovative methods of research, plus multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches, were particularly welcomed and featured.

This first World Congress was held in honor of Dimitrie Cantemir, commemorating three centuries since his death in 1723. Dimitrie Cantemir was a Moldavian prince and philosopher who represented the epitome of the Enlightenment. Bridging history and philosophy, policy and ethics, and cultural theory and ethnicity, his life and work created a bridge between East and West. It brought Oriental mysticism and wisdom into the pattern of Western civilization.

Great minds have always applied their vision and offered their responses to cultural challenges. The study of challenges and the confluences of civilizations illuminate the darkest of ages, and it simultaneously endeavors to engage for the well-being of humanity. You—our members, friends, and colleagues—are part of this engagement.
Current ISCSC scholar/members participated actively, mostly in person but also via video. There in Bucharest, we met new scholars, including the former president of Mongolia, Nambaryn Enkhbayar.

Finally, Prof. Joseph Drew and myself co-chaired a Culminating Debate, with participating speakers in English, French, Mongolian, Romanian, Italian, Spanish and Greek, on the topic: Are We on The Cusp of a New Enlightenment OR the Death of Western Civilization?

**Civilizational Security**

In the fall of 2023, the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations held its 52nd Annual Conference at the War Studies University in Warsaw, Poland. The theme of the conference was "Civilizational Security: Clashes of Civilizations, Clashes within Civilizations and Stable Global Futures."

Speakers and attendees examined the challenges and opportunities for civilizational security in the 21st century. Participants explored how different civilizations worldwide can cope with these challenges and enhance their security and resilience, while respecting their diversity and identity. The conference also addressed the role of dialogue and cooperation among civilizations in fostering peace and stability, especially in current conflict zones such as Ukraine and all impacted countries.

The theme was timely and relevant, as the world is facing unprecedented threats and uncertainties from various sources, such as terrorism, cyberattacks, climate change, pandemics and more. The conference opened with a gracious welcome from the Rector of the War Studies University, Brigadier General Dr. Robert Kosowski.

**Peace and Coexistence of Civilizations**

Following the conference in Warsaw, ISCSC President Lynn Rhodes and then Vice President Michael Andregg were invited to attend the 39th conference of the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (JSCSC) in Nagasaki, Japan. The Japan Society is a partner organization of the ISCSC as a result of ties that were established in 1983 to foster the comparative study of civilizations in Japan.

The theme of the JSCSC conference was “Peace and Coexistence of Civilizations,” and the discussions concerned works which have focused on both historical and contemporary efforts to achieve peace among different civilizations.

The conference, held in Nagasaki, also commemorated the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which marked a turning point in the history of civilization.
The conference was coordinated and led by the President of the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, Prof. Sunji Hosaka, and by the organization’s Vice President, Prof. Hisanori Kato, who also serves as the Vice President for Asia and the Pacific Region of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations.

As part of the JSCSC conference, President Rhodes and Vice President Andregg also met with the mayor of Nagasaki, Mr. Shiro Suzuki. During the meeting they discussed the importance of peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons. Mayor Suzuki, who is a son of hibakusha (as survivors of the Nagasaki bombing are known), expressed his concern about the increasing dependence on nuclear deterrence and the risk of nuclear war. He urged the world powers to break free from the nuclear threat and to realize a world without nuclear weapons.

Mayor Suzuki also posted about this meeting with the ISCSC representatives on his X page (formerly Twitter), where he shared his hope for the future of civilization: https://twitter.com/suzuki46genki/status/1723600090634522639?s=43&t=0IkQsu5eC eC4H_urubOx_w

**Health, Healing and Civilizations**

Planning is now underway for the ISCSC’s 2024 conference with its partner and host, the University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Health Services, in Alberta, Canada. The theme of this conference will be “Health, Healing and Civilizations.”

Participants will explore the interrelationships between health, healing, and civilization from various perspectives, including insights from medicine, psychology, sociology, anthropology, religion, art, and literature.

Dates are May 21, 2024, through May 24, 2024.

A feature of this conference will be the recognition of the Indigenous lands on which the University of Lethbridge is situated. We will therefore acknowledge the contributions of the Indigenous peoples to the study and survival of civilization. Visits to UNESCO-designated World Heritage Sites of Waterton Lakes National Park, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, and Writing-on-Stone are also planned.

This designated “big picture” interdisciplinary and international conference — the organization’s second in Canada — will be structured to foster critical inquiry and new interpretation of issues pertaining to our contemporary and pivotal moment in human history.
The Future

Recent and future conferences, and the related themes of enlightenment, security, peace and the wellness of civilizations are important as we look at the current and future challenges and opportunities of engagement. We warmly invite all interested scholars, students, and members of the public to join our conferences, to engage in dialogue and the exchange of ideas on the comparative study of civilizations, and to attend these stimulating and enlightening scholarly conferences.

You are invited to explore the ISCSC website: https://iscsc.org. There, you will also find links to our social media platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube and a number of video presentations.

It is an honor to serve as the president of this distinguished, meaningful organization, one founded by researchers and scholars from around the world but focused upon the civilizations which have organized the population of our planet.

Lynn Rhodes
ISCSC President