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A Newsletter of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable

THE ROUNDTABLE



Introduction to Zen Buddhism

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Two Arrow Zen Center

A fascinating and informative evening was hosted by Michael Mugaku Zimmerman Sensei, priest and founder of the Two Arrows Zen center in Salt Lake City. Mugaku, Sensei (teacher) began the evening

by sharing his spiritual journey with the 45 guests in attendance.

Essentially a humanist and philosopher, Mugaku Sensei was introduced to the Zen Buddhist practice, or Zazen (Japanese for seated meditation), while his first wife was hospitalized with terminal cancer. He

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Introduction to Zen Buddhism at the Two Arrow Zen Center

A Call to Convene

Saturday, February 27, 2016

Wasatch Retreat & Conference Center

During the 2016 Interfaith Roundtable Month, The Human Rights Education Center of Utah offered "A Call to Convene in Conversation." This event was held at the Wasatch Retreat and Conference Center and presented an opportunity for religious and nonreligious people

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"A Jewish Poet Encounters World Religion"

Sunday, February 28, 2016

Congregation Kol Ami

As part of Interfaith Roundtable Month, more than sixty guests came to Congregation Kol Ami to hear Jackie Osherow, Distinguished Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Utah, share a selection of her recent work that

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Young Adult Interfaith Event: Tribute to Interfaith Leaders

Saturday, February 27, 2016

Kafeneio Coffeehouse

Guests gathered at the Kafeneio Coffeehouse on Saturday, February 27 to listen to several young adults pay tribute to an interfaith hero. The evening was emceed by Daniel Meza.

Each began by defining interfaith, and then based on that definition, selected a leader to pay tribute to.

Nick Hicken chose Martin Luther King because of his dedication to bring about a peaceful change by teaching correct principles that enable people to govern themselves. He commented on the need for civility, quoting Dr. King saying, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." He ended by saying that we should rise to the call that comes to each of us: be the change that we want to see; look for how to fill in rather than fit in; cultivate a culture that cares more about how well we see, than how good we look.

Ellie Anders began her talk, stating, "Interfaith cooperation is about values, shared values. Religions have fundamentally different truth claims, but they hold common values." She said that she is close to those she shared the stage with that evening, even though they fundamentally disagree theologically. Although they disagree about some things, it does not take away their capacity to first, be friends, and second, to work toward good together.

She asked, "What are values?" Values are not ethereal. They are tangible and practical ideas causing us to move, act, and serve in different capacities. For example, many hold care for creation in high regard, and



Daniel Meza

others hold forgiveness highest in their values system. Anders spoke to the value of hospitality. The kind of hospitality she spoke of is authentic and empathetic, which our society wrestles with today and has struggled with historically. Every wave of migration has brought new rounds of exclusionary practices. Each practice, law, and act of hate, are woven together with fear and ignorance.



Nick Hicken pays tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Hospitality requires great effort and for that reason she chose to pay tribute to Dr. Larycia Hawkins.

Anders said she sees herself in Dr. Hawkins, an academic who worked for an evangelical Christian university. Dr. Hawkins engaged in interfaith dialogue while teaching her students to think critically about all they see and hear. Ellie identifies as a non-denominational Christian and wants to teach students about the values found by engaging in interfaith cooperation. Dr. Hawkins strived to extend hospitality to Muslims. She did so as a Christian reaching out to a marginalized population.

Dr. Hawkins demonstrated hospitality in three ways. First, she wore a hijab. She took the opportunity to walk a mile in another person's shoes. She had the opportunity to feel the glares and experience the hate speech directed toward women wearing headscarves. The headscarf coincidentally represents another value, modesty. Modesty has been observed across religious lines for

numerous years. Dr. Hawkins also showed empathy in her efforts to learn about Islam. She referenced a phrase used throughout the Islamic scripture, “people of the book.” By using this phrase, Dr. Hawkins exhibited a desire to learn more about a religion other than her own. She understood the reference, and used it correctly to identify common bonds. Finally, Dr. Hawkins did something essential to interfaith work. She identified why her actions were motivated by her own faith. She sought a religious authority by referencing a quote from Pope Francis from a few months ago. The Pope is quoted as saying “Jesus Christ, Jehovah, Allah. These are all names employed to describe an entity that is distinctly the same across the world. For centuries, blood has been needlessly shed because of the desire to segregate our faiths.”

Though Dr. Hawkins chose to quote Pope Francis, she could very well have also quoted Jesus. In Luke 10, Jesus describes a man who is robbed, beaten and left for dead. Many pass the beaten man by, afraid to go near, but a person of a different ethnicity and faith stopped to help



Samer Merchant

the man. He binds his wounds and helps care for the beaten man. Jesus asked, “Who was the neighbor?” Certainly it is the individual who may not have anything else in common, but senses this person is in his keeping. Dr. Hawkins lost her job for her values manifest as actions, but continues to work toward being a hospitable neighbor. She demonstrated the value of hospitality and is therefore worthy of an interfaith tribute.

A popular belief in modern society is that science and religion are always at odds. Many think the rationalism of science overweighs the need of faith in a higher power or a dogged belief in religious texts that overlook scientific facts. Interestingly, this is not a new notion. Galileo was ordered by the Cardinal “to abandon completely... the opinion that the sun stands still at the center of the world and the earth moves, and henceforth not to hold, teach, or defend it in any way whatever, either orally or in writing.” Various controversies over the course of time, such as creationism versus evolution, have only supported this notion.

Samer Merchant chose Henry Eyring as his interfaith hero, sharing his admiration for scientists that have been able to reconcile their religion with their scientific endeavors.

Henry Eyring was a Mexican-born, American theoretical chemist whose primary contribution was in the study of chemical reaction rates. He wrote more than 600 scientific articles, 10 scientific books and even books on the subject of science and religion. His scientific achievements are considered some of the most important of the 20th century, and many chemists were surprised when he did not receive the Nobel Prize. Apparently, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences did not understand his theory and awarded him the Berzelius Medal in 1977 as partial compensation.

Together with his scientific credits, he was also a prominent and devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. So how did he resolve this conflict of science and religion? It was not difficult for Eyring. In his words, “I have been announced as a student of science. But I also like to think of myself as one who loves the Gospel of Jesus



Young Adult Interfaith Event: Tribute to Interfaith Leaders >>> *Continued*

Christ. For me there has been no serious difficulty in reconciling the principles of true science with the principles of true religion, for both are concerned with the eternal verities of the universe”

He suggested a symbiosis between science and religion; he said, “I am now going to venture to say that science has rendered a service to religion. The scientific spirit is a spirit of inquiry, a spirit of reaching out for truth. In the final analysis, this spirit is likewise of the essence of religion.”

He argued that scientists and people of faith both must have childlike humility. Our understanding, great as it sometimes seems, can be nothing but the wide-eyed wonder of the child when measured against the Creator’s omniscience. Eyring believed the conflict between religion and science was because of the incomplete knowledge we have in both the spheres, compared to the vast knowledge of a Creator.

In addition to his role as a professor, Eyring was also a scientific advisor to leaders of the LDS Church.

Throughout his life, Eyring continued to temper religion with science and science with religion. In conclusion, Merchant said, “the thread that ties both religion and science is the pursuit of truth.”

The final speaker of the evening was Ephisa Masud, who chose to speak about Roger Williams, a Puritan who became a Reformed Baptist. He believed that the Church of England was corrupt and was a proponent for the separation of church and state. He also strongly believed in religious freedom.

He befriended the Native Americans, learning their language and customs and developed a dictionary of the native languages. He helped to keep peace between the tribes and the colonies.

The churches criticized him for not baptizing a single Native American. After many conflicts with church leaders and the courts, he was expelled because they thought he was spreading “new and dangerous ideas.”

He eventually bought some land from Massasoit, but had to move. He



Ellie Anders

then bought another parcel of land in 1636 that was beyond any government charter and provided a refuge for religious minorities. He called the settlement “Providence,” as he felt God’s providence had brought him there. He later named his third child Providence.

Following the presentation, the speakers were invited to the stage to form a panel and respond to questions from the floor. Everyone appreciated the effort made by the young adults to prepare their enlightening speeches and to give a different perspective to current and past events that have affected our lives.



Question and answer session from the audience

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of each member or member organization. The Roundtable encourages open discussion and dialogue.

Voices of Faith: Sacred Prayers and Traditions

Sunday, March 20, 2016

Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable's Musical Tribute was held on Sunday, March 20th, at the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square. This year's concert carried over some of the same numbers from the Parliament of the World's Religions' interfaith musical event, organized by the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable's Musical Tribute committee chaired by Dave Sharp and Alan Bachman.

Bonnie Goodliffe, the tabernacle organist, played the prelude music as people gathered for the evening. Carole Mikita from KSL Television was emceed the evening. Opening devotions were offered, beginning with Lacee Harris, a Northern Ute and Northern Piute. A Muslim Call to Prayer was given by Masood Ul-Hasan from the Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake, followed by a Jewish prayer from Alan Scott Bachmann and Shofar player Larry Green from the Utah Jewish community.

Elder John C. Pingree Jr., of the Area Seventy and the host on behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints welcomed everyone to the Tabernacle. Reverend Father Elias Koucos of the Greek Orthodox Church and chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable gave the opening invocation.

The musical presentations began with the stirring Utah Pipe Band, twirling their batons and marching to the beat of the drums and the bagpipes. The pipe band representing the Presbyterian Faith performed "Highland Cathedral," directed by



Carole Mikita from KSL Television was emcee

John Barclay. The Utah Pipe Band was founded in 1937 by Robert S. Barclay and is the oldest continuously organized band of its kind in the western United States.

Continuing with music from the British Isles, the Idlewild Quartet performed "Ar Hyd y Nos," a Welsh lullaby and blessing, followed by "the Gued Man of Ballangigh," an English country dance, and "Hunt the Cat," an Irish jig. The quartet, conducted by Dave Sharp, played a variety of instruments, such as the cittern, Irish flute, Celtic Harp, whistle, fiddle and guitar.

Next, we were transported to another part of the world by a Hindu dance troupe who performed "Bharathanatyam," by Chitrakavya Dance and directed by SriLatha Singh and Raksha Karpoor. The dance is an invocation to Devi—the divine feminine—asking "please bless us with beauty of the mind and body, victory over all that is evil, fame, and rid us of the obstacles in our path to purity of the spirit."

Representing the Jewish faith, Desert Wind performed "Moshiach"



Lacee Harris



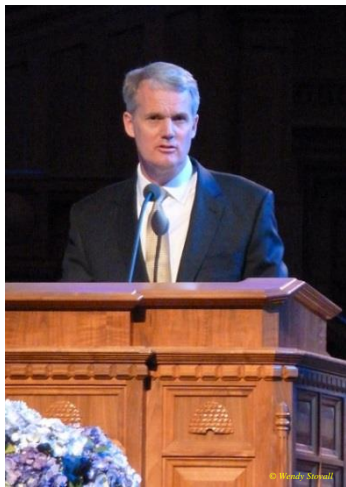
Masood Ul-Hasan



Alan Scott Bachmann



Larry Green



Elder John C. Pingree, Jr.



Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos and Canon Caryl Marsh



Utah Pipe Band

(Messiah) and “Tikkun Olam,” led by Alan Scott Bachmann. Rajab Harrou and Bryan Bale played Middle Eastern percussion instruments accompanied by Andalin Bachman on the flute and Alan Bachman on the piano.

The Ogden Buddhist Temple Taiko drummers, directed by Stan Hirai, gave a masterful rendition of Taiko drumming. One could feel the rise and fall of the throbbing drums throughout the tabernacle as the skillful performers raised and lowered the tempo of their drumming during the performance.

The youth from Pacifica Institute, conducted by Zeynep Kariparduc, performed the traditional Whirling Dervish dance, which comes from the Sufi tradition and is influenced by Turkish customs and culture. This ritual unites the three fundamental components of human nature: the mind through knowledge and thought; the heart through the expression of feelings, poetry and music, and the body by activating life through turning. By revolving in harmony with all things in nature, the dervish testifies to the existence and the majesty of the Creator.



Hindu Dance

The Whirling Dervishes were followed by the beautiful voices of the LDS Institute of Religion’s Concert Choir from Utah Valley University. The Choir was directed by Ryan Eggett. They performed “I Will Rise,” arranged by Craig Courtney, and “True to the Faith,” arranged by Chemain Evans and Ryan Eggett.

Next came the poised and beautifully robed Cambodian Buddhist Khemera Dance Troupe wearing tall gold colored spires on their heads. They performed a sacred dance, choreographed over 2000 years ago in the Royal Palace and used to bind



Idlewild Quartet



Desert Wind



Ogden Buddhist Temple Taiko drummers

this world with the celestial abode of their ancestors. In 2015, they celebrated their 15th anniversary of preserving the sacred dances of Cambodia.

The Burundi Drum Group performed the final set. The drummers exhibited their spirituality through their mind and body unified as they balanced the instruments on their heads while drumming to the heart beat of Africa. Refugees from Burundi drum to keep their African spirituality alive. The group is directed by Alex Ngendakuriyo who was born in Uganda.

Carole Mikita gave the closing remarks, followed by Josie Stone, Vice Chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, who thanked Mikita for emceeding the evening and brought forward a young performer to offer her a bouquet of flowers.

Imam Muhammed Mehtar from the Khadeeja Mosque and Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake gave the closing benediction and spoke of the need to work together in peace and harmony.

In the tradition of closing the evening, the choir and audience sang the song, "Let there be Peace on Earth."



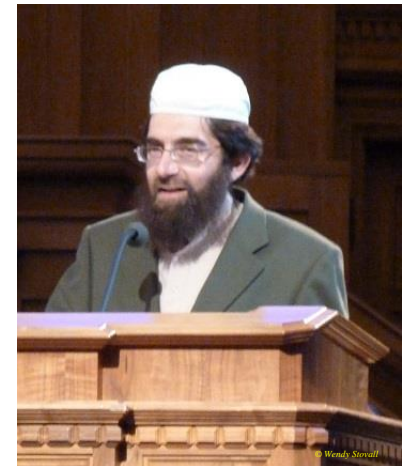
Pacifica Institute Whirling Dervish dance



Josie Stone



LDS Institute of Religion's Concert Choir from Utah Valley University



Imam Muhammed Mehtar



Cambodian Buddhist Khemera Dance Troupe

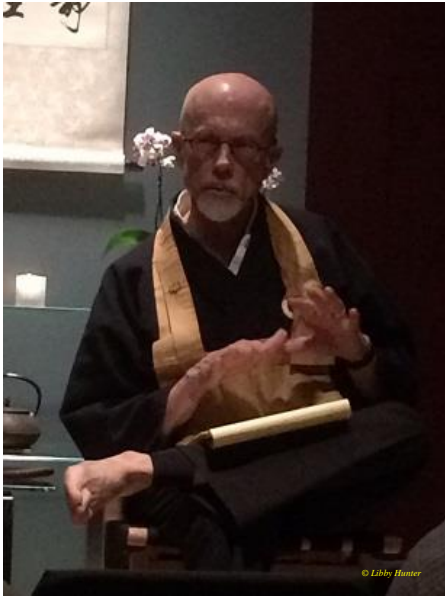


Burundi Drum Group

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865624657/United-through-music-Members-of-various-faiths-to-perform-in-annual-Salt-Lake-Interfaith-Musical.html?pg=all>

<http://www.sltrib.com/csp/mediapool/sites/sltrib/Pages/gallery.csp?cid=2320506&pid=2312869>

Introduction to Zen Buddhism >>> *Continued from first page*



Michael Mugaku Zimmerman Sensei, priest and founder of the Two Arrows Zen Center in Salt Lake City

said that meditation helped him settle himself and be in the present moment. The Zen practice, over time, allowed him to develop a capacity for introspection and reduce his stress, fear and anger. Mugaku Sensei explained that Zen can help an individual see through his or her personal narrative, so the world is not based on preconceptions; one sees it as it is, not as she or he wishes it to be. This connection can lead to ethical behavior, compassion and empathy. After this introduction, the attendees joined Mugaku Sensei in the peaceful Zendo for a silent seated



meditation. Following the meditation, visitors could be heard eagerly asking questions of Mugaku Sensei and the Two Arrows' monks and students.

A Call to Convene

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to gather and respectfully share stories about their varying beliefs and values. What was revealed was the sacred core of our common humanity and the acknowledgment that we are more alike than we are different.

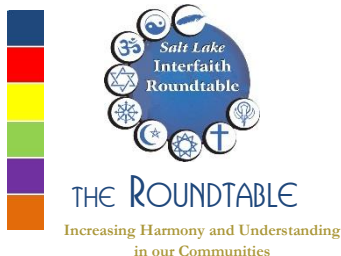
HREC is continuing these discussions, if interested please contact them at hrecutah.org.

"A Jewish Poet Encounters World Religion"

Continued from first page

focuses on world religions. Jackie, the recipient of numerous awards, prizes, and grants, has had many of her poems appear in a wide range of prestigious journals and anthologies. She credits her early study of the Torah, the Psalms, and other Jewish writings for her fascination and love

of words. Jackie read from her latest series of poems in which she attempts to understand religion as a unifying influence, connecting believers of different faiths to one another. She also shared the influence of her own religion on her poetry.



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