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A Newsletter of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable

THE ROUNDTABLE



Cultural and Religious Pluralism Today

Building Civility and Unity

Salt Lake City, historically known as the center of the LDS faith, has emerged as a multi-religious society. Native Americans, together with various branches of Christianity and Judaism—as well as the more recently arriving Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Buddhist communities—are living side by side, seeking to create mutual understanding and respect for their faiths, cultures, and traditions

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable co-sponsored with the City Library a recent conference called “Cultural and Religious Pluralism Today: Building Civility and Unity”, from September 8–11, 2011, at the Main Library, 210 East 400 South.

The conference’s purpose was to encourage everyone in Salt Lake City to participate in dialogue that explores and compares traditions and cultures, recognizes commonalities between faiths, affirms the right to express cultural outlooks and religious faith freely, fosters a respectful and peaceful society, and explores opportunities for cooperation between members of different cultures and faiths.



Out of Cordoba
Filmmaker Jacob Bender

The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Democratic Citizenship Today

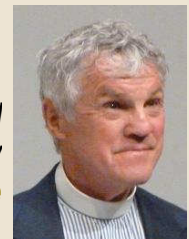
Professor Robert Hefner



Men are from Mecca and Women are from Medina
with Baba Ali

The Role of Interfaith Leaders in Building Religious Pluralism and Ethical Unity

Moderator Rev. Ivan Cendese



Strong People Don't Need Strong Leaders: Building Movements from the Bottom-Up

Professor Charles M. Payne

September 9, 2011

Out of Cordoba

Filmmaker Jacob Bender

The documentary film *Out of Cordoba* explores some of the most vexing questions of our time: Is there a "clash of civilizations" between the West and the Islamic world? Are Jews and Muslims eternal enemies, incapable of peaceful coexistence? Does religious faith lead inevitably to xenophobia and violence? *Out of Cordoba* confronts these issues through an exploration of the lives and writings of the two most important thinkers to emerge from medieval Muslim Spain: Averroes the Muslim, and his Jewish counterpart, Rabbi Moses Maimonides. The 82-minute film explores the legacy of these two philosophers, as well as their contemporary importance for interfaith relations, and especially for Muslims, Jews, and Christians struggling against religious extremism.

Jacob Bender is a documentary filmmaker, video producer, photographer, graphic designer, and interfaith consultant. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Bender was one of the initiators of interfaith dialogue with the American Muslim community. He has spoken dozens of times at mosques and at large gatherings of Muslims in the United States, particularly at the conventions of the Islamic Society of North America, the largest Muslim organization in the US.



Filmmaker Jacob Bender



September 10, 2011

The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Democratic Citizenship Today

Professor Robert Hefner

In the aftermath of the Cold War, some observers spoke optimistically of an "end to history" made possible by a global agreement on the values of liberal democracy and market capitalism. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts and an upsurge in terrorist violence in parts of the world led other observers to more pessimistic conclusions, some warning of a clash of civilizations pitting a secular democratic West against non-Western rivals.

In his presentation, Professor Hefner surveyed recent developments in religion and politics around the world, including the United States, suggesting that there is no end to history and no easy agreement on how to live together as democratic citizens in religiously plural societies. He presented recent developments that provide clues and hope about what kind of political arrangements are best suited to promote democratic citizenship in a world both deeply pluralistic and vibrantly religious.

Robert Hefner is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA) at Boston University. At CURA, he has di-



Professor Robert Hefner

rected the program on Islam and civil society since 1991; coordinated interdisciplinary research and public policy programs on religion, pluralism, and world affairs; and is currently involved in comparative research on citizenship and the challenge of pluralism in Muslim-majority and Western societies. He is a regular consultant on religion and

world affairs for government and the media, and has written seven major policy reports, authored or edited 16 books (including *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*), and has directed and organized several research projects and international conferences.



Eid al-Fitr Celebration

Eid al-Fitr, which literally means "the feast of breaking the fast," marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. Eid al-Fitr is a time for fellowship, to come together as a community and renew friendships and family ties. The City Library's Eid al-Fitr celebration included crafts, a magician, and henna tattoo painting.

Men are from Mecca and Women are from Medina

with Baba Ali

YouTube sensation Baba Ali touched on the differences between men and women and provided insight on how to understand, respect and appreciate their differences in a marriage.

The year's most promising Muslim comedian, he took a lighthearted approach toward Muslim-based entertainment, cutting through the muck of grandstanding and politicizing issues by simply telling it like it is. His sharp-witted style took a realistic look at the everyday issues Muslims are confronted with, but instead of mocking Islam, he used a comical approach that hit the mark with almost every viewer, without using offensive material. Baba Ali's videos have been viewed online more than 10 million times, and his work has been featured by numerous media outlets, including the New York Times, USA Today, and BBC.



Baba Ali

The Role of Interfaith Leaders in Building Religious Pluralism and Ethical Unity

Moderator Rev. Ivan Cendese



Members of various religious faiths were called upon to explore those commonalities within their own traditions that help foster a society in which all traditions and cultures can live in peace and harmony.

Panel members from left: Dr. Iqbal Hossain, President, Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake; Indra Neelameggham, Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple; Alan Scott Bachman, Chair, Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable; Rev. Canon W. Ivan Cendese, Ph.D., Executive Director, Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable; Maysa Kergaye, Islamic Speakers Bureau; Jerry Hirano, Salt Lake Buddhist Temple; Steve Stewart, Salt Lake City Area Public Affairs Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Pluralism and Civility: The Role of Religion in Building Ethical Unity

Moderator Dr. Muriel Schmid

Civility can be understood as the civic expression of the Golden Rule, a version of which is found in all major faith traditions. So in spite of significant cultural and doctrinal differences, a shared commitment to civility by religious groups can be an important underpinning for building ethical unity across all of their differences. The panel members addressed this important role of civility from the perspective of their respective religious traditions.

Panel members from left: Panel Members: Brian Farr, Member, LDS Church; President, Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy; Imam Muhammed Shoayb Mehtar, Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake; Reverend Langes J. Silva, JCD, Judicial Vicar & Vice-Chancellor, Diocese of Salt Lake City; Rabbi Joshua M Aaronson, Temple Har Shalom, Park City; Pastor Scott Dalgarno, Wasatch Presbyterian Church, PC(USA); John Kesler, Director of the Utah Civility and Community 2011 Initiative; Dr. Muriel Schmid, University of Utah



September 11, 2011

Lessons of Tolerance: How to Build Ethical Unity

Moderator Dr. Reaz Chaudhuri

Tolerance entails sensitivity to others' points of view. The goal of achieving ethical unity is not to develop a consensus on itemized moral and ethical issues; it is rather to avoid marginalizing the weak and the under-represented and to provide dignity and space to those we disagree with, including groups advocating atheism or agnosticism. There must also be an economic imperative for an ethical system to be sustainable over the longer term. The present knowledge-based economic system must, therefore, be transitioned to its logical end—a wisdom-based system. The important role of our respected community leaders, scholars, rabbis, pastors, monks and imams, is to join hands and provide ethical guidance to our future inventors, scientists, venture capitalists, and political leadership to make that transformation happen.



Strong People Don't Need Strong Leaders: Building Movements from the Bottom-Up

Professor Charles M. Payne

Many members of the American Civil Rights movement were deeply committed to the principle that pluralistic values are most likely to thrive in societies where everyday citizens are deeply involved in civic life rather than depending on leaders, even democratically elected ones. Professor Payne's talk examined the thinking and work of these activists, including the impact they had on other democratizing movements (such as the student power movement, the anti-war movement, the Chicano and Native American movements, and modern feminism) resulting in a society that gave more space to previously excluded groups. He also explored contemporary forms of the politics of empowerment, some of them directly traceable to the Civil Rights movement.

Professor Charles M. Payne is the Frank P. Hixon Professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. His interests include urban education and school reform, social inequality, social change and modern African American



Professor Charles M. Payne

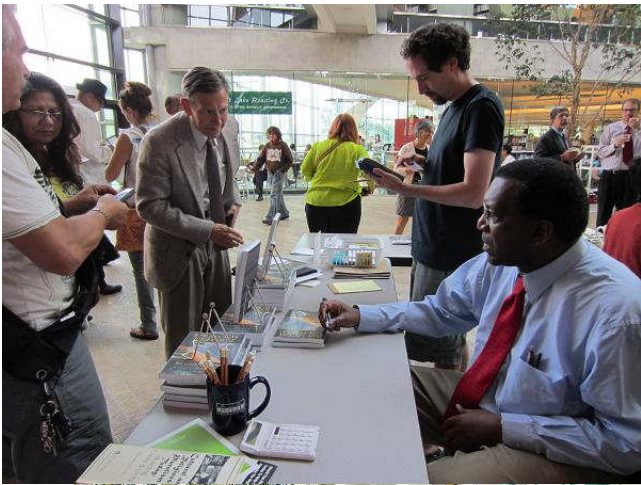
history. His most recent books are *So Much Reform, So Little Change* (Harvard Education Publishing Group, 2008) which examines the persistence of failure in urban schools, and an anthology, *Teach Freedom: The African American Tradition of Education For Liberation* (Teachers College Press,

2008), which is concerned with Freedom School-like education. With the support of the Carnegie Scholar's Program, he is doing a study of how school reform dialogue in other countries compares to the American situation.

September 9-11, 2011

Cultural and Religious Pluralism Today







The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Meet the Board Members

~ Aden Batar

My family and I came to the U.S. in 1994 as the first refugees from Somalia resettled in Utah through Catholic Community Services of Utah. For the past 16 years I have been working with refugees who have been resettled in Utah, helping them to successfully integrate into our community and become self-sufficient without being depend-

ent on public assistance. Being a refugee myself, I use my experience and struggles to educate other refugees on how they can successfully integrate into our community and become contributing members of our society.

I earned a law degree from Somali National University. When I came to the U.S. in 1994, I attended Utah State University Intensive English Institute to further my English. I started working for Catholic Community Services of Utah in 1996 and have gained extensive experience about refugee resettlement and U.S. immigration laws, especially with respect to refugee admissions, family reunification and U.S. citizenship. I'm an Immigration attorney by training. I represented thousands of refugees and Immigrants reunite with their families and gain U.S. Citizenship.

Currently I'm the Director of Refugee Resettlement and Immigration for Catholic Community Services. Thousands of refugees were resettled by Catholic Community Ser-

vices in Utah. Under my leadership, in 2006, Catholic Community Services Refugee Resettlement Program was recognized nationally as one of the most ethnically diverse program in the U.S. Utah is one of the States that have a rapidly growing diverse refugee community who are self-sufficient and contributing to the state's economy.

In my spare time, I serve by volunteering in different community organizations including; Utah State Refugee Board of Advisors, Utah State Black Advisory Council, Board of the United Africans of Utah, Diversity Council Utah State Courts, DWS Community Advisory Group, Founder of the Somali Community Services of Utah, and the Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake.

I'm widely known and respected by all the refugee and Immigrant communities in Utah. I have touched and changed so many lives. I received so much from this great country and this is my way of returning the help I received back to the community.

Religious Holidays



October

- 4th St Francis Day (*Catholic*)
- 5th Waqf al Arafa - Hajj Day (*Islam*)
- 6th Dussehra (*Hindu*)
- 8th Yom Kippur (*Jewish*)
- 10th Thanksgiving - Interfaith - Canada
- 13th - 19th Sukkot (*Jewish*)
- 20th Birth of the Bab (*Baha'i*)
Shemini Atzeret (*Jewish*)
Installation of Scriptures as
Guru Granth (*Sikh*)
- 21st Simchat Torah (*Jewish*)
- 22nd New Year (*Jain*)
- 24th - 28th Deepavali (*Hindu*)
- 26th Diwali (*Jain - Hindu - Sikh*)
- 27th 52nd True Children's Day (*Unificationist*)
(10-1 Lunar)
- 28th Milvan Bridge Day (*Christian*)
- 29th 24th Kae-Cheon Jeol (Foundation Day for
the Unified Nation of Heaven & Earth)
(*Unificationist*) (10-3 Lunar)
- 30th Reformation Day (*Protestant Christian*)
- 31st All Hallows Eve (*Christian*)

November

- 1st All Saints' Day (*Christian*)
Samhain - Beltane (*Wicca/Pagan*)
- 2nd All Souls' Day (*Catholic Christian*)
- 4-7th Hajj (*Islam*)
- 5th Waqf al Arafa - Hajj Day (*Islam*)
- 6-9th Eid al Adha (*Islam*)
- 10th Guru Nanak Dev Sahib birthday (*Sikh*)
- 12th Birth of Baha'u'llah (*Baha'i*)
- 15th Nativity Fast begins (*Orthodox Christian*)
- 20th Christ the King (*Christian*)
- 24th Thanksgiving (*Interfaith*)
Gkuru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom (*Sikh*)
- 26th Day of Covenant (*Baha'i*)
Hijra - New Year (*Islam*)
- 27th First Sunday of Advent (*Christian*)
- 30th Saint Andrew's Day (*Christian*)

Remembering Rev. Dr. Marti Su Zimmerman

Rev. Dr. Marti Su Zimmerman died on September 11, 2011, following a two-year battle with cancer. Dr. Zimmerman had been pastor at Smoky Hill United Methodist Church in Aurora, Colorado, for seventeen years prior to being appointed to Christ United Methodist Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July of 2009.

Marti, as almost everyone knew her, was a graduate of the University of Colorado, Union Theological Seminary in New

York City, and the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. With her passing she leaves behind her husband Mack, and her daughters Kristan, Lindsey, and Jessie. She will be remembered for her passionate commitment to acceptance of all people and her belief that Christians ought to live by the standards set by Jesus.

Donations can be made in her name to the Southern Poverty Law Center or Crossroads Urban Center of Salt Lake City.



**Increasing Harmony and Understanding
in our Communities**

The **Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable** is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your tax deductible contributions are very much appreciated and help to make our work of faith cooperation and event planning possible. We could also use donations of office supplies, such as stamps and copy paper.

Go to <http://www.interfaithroundtable.org> and click on the "Donations" tab to pay through PayPal or mail your check or money order to:

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