

Network News

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Good Greetings!

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to the Network of Muslim Peacebuilding and Interfaith Dialogue. This will be a bimonthly newsletter announcing new events, conferences, and profiles of organizations working on interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding. It will also address current practices and procedures in Islamic peacebuilding and development, as well as highlight exemplary professionals in the field. It is my hope that it will serve as a tool to stay connected with the peacebuilding community. As a part of this we encourage our members to contribute to the newsletter, whether it is through announcing events/conferences or by submitting relevant research articles and editorials. Through this we can jointly make the newsletter dynamic and encourage discourse. The newsletter is only one of the tools for you to utilize within the greater Network.

By joining the Network for Muslim Peacebuilding and Interfaith Dialogue you will also receive the following benefits: access to the global Muslim Peacebuilders Database, this bimonthly newsletter, discounts on Salam publications and conferences, and an online resource library. The network will also act as forum allowing members to discuss the best approaches and applications for conflict resolution.

If your not a member and would like to join the network please, call or email Salam Institute for Peace and Justice at network@salaminstitute.org. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at our events. Thank you all for your continued support and interest.

In Peace,
Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer

We are happy to introduce our first organizational profile the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice:

The Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, a nonprofit organization, was established in 2004 for the purpose of bridging differences within and between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Salam's areas of activity include research and evaluation; peacebuilding intervention and training, development and relief; as well as encouraging and disseminating resources and publications.

More specifically, the Salam Institute provides scholarly and professional knowledge and expertise to governmental and non-governmental organizations and to individuals on various dimensions of political, socio-cultural, religious, and economic aspects of conflicts in Islamic context. In addition, the Salam Institute aims to enhance the knowledge base of Islamic models for conflict resolution and peace among practitioners, academicians, and policymakers. It encourages and facilitates inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue among Muslims and non-Muslims in Western and non-Western societies and promotes an action orientation towards peace and justice among different communities.



For more information on the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice please visit their Website at www.salaminstitute.org or email Salam at info@salaminstitute.org

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Annual Conference of Muslim Peacebuilding, Justice, and Interfaith Dialogue

The Salam Institute for Peace and Justice and the Islamic Society of North America are happy to announce the successful completion of the first Annual Conference of Muslim Peacebuilding, Justice, and Interfaith Dialogue (MPJID) from April 28th-29th, 2006. The main objective of the conference was to provide a space and opportunity for Muslim organizations and individuals to share their work and views on the themes of interfaith dialogue, development, peace, and justice. Furthermore, the conference was paired with a two day Imam training in Islamic Perspectives of Conflict Resolution. Both events were huge successes and resulted in an open call for the continuation of research and dialogue, both academically and practically in the areas of Islamic understandings of peace, Islamic principles and values of conflict resolution, interfaith dialogue and development, and how these principles can be applied to current day conflicts. Here is a short description of the panels presented at the Conference for a more complete report please follow this link: http://www.salaminstitute.org/Resources/Comprehensive_Report.pdf



Panel 1: Peace through Development- Experiences from Muslim Communities and the Muslim World

This panel focused on the effect of development practices in Muslim communities on the peace and sustainability of both these communities themselves and their outside interactions. The first case study was presented by Kathleen Meilahn, who spoke about the United States inability to create sustainable peace in Iraq due to its lack of cultural and religious understanding. Ms. Meilahn was followed by Dr. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana who presented the research of the Salam Institute's study on Muslim Peacebuilders in Africa and the Balkans. Her major findings included the use and need to expand the Islamic concept of *tawhid* which states that everything created by God emanates from God-and we must understand unity through plurality. The final presentation was by Putut Widjanarko focused on the contribution of Ummah to reducing ethnic differences within Islam.



Panel 2: Intra-Muslim Dialogue

This panel focused on the need for intra-faith dialogue within the Muslim community. The presentors pinpointed the Sunni-Shia split, differences between

converted Muslims and born Muslims, as well as diversity in ideological differences between the American Muslim Communities.

Panel 3: Islamic Approaches to Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Imam Muhammad Shafiq began this panel with the survey of the state of conflict resolution and dialogue in the Muslim world today. He expanded on the point that Muslim communities are more willing to participate in inter-faith dialogue then intra-faith dialogue. Abd' Al-Hayy Weinman then presented on the integration of local and universal concepts of conflict resolution and their interplay with in the greater Islamic context. He was followed by Mohamed H. Mukhtar who expanded on the principals inherent in Islam to achieve mediation. including the practice of Jama'ah. Jama'ah in African Islam involves the creation of a natural buffer zone in the middle of a conflict which serves as a new community for victims.

Panel 4: Peacebuilding, Democracy, and Human Rights in the Islamic Context

This panel focused on clarifying the place of these three themes in Islam by discussion their historical and

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current applications. The case studies included both the historical and current place of women in peacebuilding in Islam, the historical example of the civil and pacifist strategies of the Meccan Phase, and the 2006 Palestinian elections.

Panel 5: Islamic Approaches for Interfaith Dialogue

This panel provided several examples of interfaith dialogue by Muslims including the creation of a game, which was later workshopped at the conference, to encourage interfaith dialogue. Imam Kazerooni presented on the role of civil society in interfaith dialogue, and Junaid Ahmed presented on the need to move beyond just dialogue to interfaith solidarity and justice campaigns.

Panel 6: Successes, Lessons Learned, and Challenges Facing Muslims and Muslim Organization Working for Peace and Justice

This panel reviewed the importance of Muslim organizations working for peace as well as their challenges. The two major organizations highlighted were the Interfaith Youth Core based out of Chicago and the American Muslim Voice. The Interfaith Youth Core focused not only on the importance of dialogue but coordinated action, such as community service, to create true understanding; while the American Muslim Voice discussed their strategies for dealing with a lack of funding and communication with other organizations in their work.



Thank you so much to everyone who made the First Annual Conference such a success! We look forward to sharing more of the highlighting and continuing the exchanges begun during this exciting weekend!

The Conflict Transformation Grant: Three Cities Dialogues

Washington, DC
Rochester, New York
Pasadena, CA

These dialogues will begin the interaction between Muslim and Christian communities in these three cities, as part of the greater Conflict Transformation Grant. The dialogues will utilize the interfaith manual co-written as part of the grant by Fuller and Salam scholars. If you, someone you know, your mosque, or congregation is interested in joining these dialogues please contact Diya Agha at the Salam Institute 202-244-8947, or email her at diya@salaminstitute.org or contact Jared Holton of the Fuller Theological Seminary at 626-584-5376, or email him at jholton@fuller.edu

More on the Conflict Transformation Program- The Conflict Transformation Project was funded through a grant from the Department of Justice for the purpose of building interfaith relations and mutual understanding between American Christian Evangelicals and American Muslims in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and for creating and promoting joint conflict transformation projects, trainings, manuals, and goals. In partnership with the Fuller Theological Seminary, the Salam Institute has sought to engage the full spectrum of views and opinions of American Muslims on dialogue with Evangelicals by reaching out to different members of the Muslim community living in the United States.

Upcoming Events:

Summer Leadership Development
Program 2006



ISNA Leadership Development Center (ILDC) offers a full program of intensive courses during its annual Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), while providing partial programs throughout the year at various metro areas. Participants in ISNA Leadership Development Center (ILDC) programs will have the opportunity to complete course requirements in three-week period at SLI or to enroll in three different courses that can be offered at different metro areas. For more information or to register please visit www.ildc.net/summer-leadership-institute/.

New Publications!

Contemporary Islam Dynamic, Not Static. Edited by Abdul Aziz Said, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, and Meena Sharify-Funk. Routledge Publishing, 2006.

This book provides a counterweight to the prevailing opinions of Islamic thought as conservative and static with a preference for violence over dialogue. It gathers together a collection of eminent scholars from around the world who tackle issues such as intellectual pluralism, gender, the ethics of political participation, human rights, non-violence and religious harmony. This book provides a progressive outlook for Islam's role in contemporary politics and society.

Facing One Qiblah Legal & Doctrinal Aspects of Sunni and Shiah Muslims. Karim Crow, Singapore: Pustaka Nasional Pte, 2005.

For Islam to play a vital part in any future world order as a coherent viable entity speaking in unison to address regional and global concerns of security and peace, then Muslims must find ways to wisely address their divergence with pragmatism and above all with sincerity. This work written by two impartial Muslim scholars is a humble step towards realizing this worthy goal.

Just a reminder of the benefits of Network Membership:

- 15% discount on all Salam Publications
- Free registration to all Salam Conferences
- This bi-monthly newsletter
- Access to the Muslim Peacebuilders Database
- Updated lists of events and Publications relevant to Muslim Peacebuilding

To join the Network, please follow this link:

<http://www.salaminstitute.org/Join/network.htm> or email the network at network@salaminstitute.org.

Or you can call the Salam office at 202-244-8947.

We are also pleased to announce the organizations which will form the Network of Muslim Peacebuilding and Interfaith Dialogue Advisory Board:



Muslim Peace Fellowship

