

FESTIVAL OF FAITH

September 17, 2006
Portland State University, Smith Student Center

CLOSING REMARKS, Gulzar Ahmed, Volunteer, ICGP.

History of ICGP

History of Festival of Faith

Committee

Janet Leatherwood, Wajdi Said, Rev. Dr. Hector Lopez, Morris Taylor, Aryeh Hirschfield, Rev. Christopher Laing, Gail Ramjan; Angie DeRouchie; Barbara Campbell; Salma Ahmad; Shantu Shah, Shanan Gardiner, Sagheer Haider, Tom Tucker, David Leslie, Gary Spanovich; Jan Elfers, Gulzar Ahmed, Diane Tutch

Shanan Gardiner has helped us with this event planning.

Kalim Qamar has helped us with our web site: www.ifcgp.org

Rev. Christopher Laing gave us the concept of Kaleidoscope of Faith. This was the idea behind the development of logo for the Festival of Faith which you see on program booklet.

Christians, Muslims including Shias and Sunnis, Jews, Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, and others.

They all worked towards the goal of making this event a reality. It was indeed a very rewarding experience in which we have fostered friendship which we will treasure for the rest of our lives.

Festival of faith and what we learned today.

We all have the same GOD.

All beings are created by God. Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists were not created by different gods. He created us all and He sustains all, without prejudice, from creatures on top of mountains to the bottom of oceans.

We are all brothers and sisters. From same parents.

How must we deal with each other: Here are some examples from various faith traditions:

JUDAISM: The Talmud tells a story of Rabbi Hillel, who lived around the time of Jesus (PBUH). A pagan came to him saying that he would convert to Judaism if Hillel could teach him the whole of Torah in the time he could stand on one foot. Hillel replied. "What is hateful to yourself, do not do to your fellowman. That is the whole Torah; the rest is just commentary. Go and study it."

CHRISTIANITY: The greatest Commandment. Mark 12:28-31

- 28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus (PBUH) had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which one is most important?”
- 29 “The most important one”, answered Jesus (PBUH) “is this: ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one.
- 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.
- 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.

ISLAM: The most Honored in the Sight of God. Quran 49:13

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of male and female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

Quran 11:118 And had your lord so willed, He could surely have made all human beings into one single community but (He willed it otherwise, and so) they continue to have divergent views.

BUDDHISM: Because we all share an identical need for love, it is possible to feel that anybody we meet, in whatever circumstances, is a brother or sister. No matter how new the face or how different the dress and behavior, there is no significant division between us and other people. It is foolish to dwell on external differences, because our basic nature is the same. I try to treat whoever I meet as an old friend. This gives me a genuine feeling of happiness. The Dalai Lama

WE ARE ALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS. Jallauddin RUMI said “The lamps are different but the light is the same”.

When we bring Light to Darkness, it disappears.

When we bring Love to hate, it disappears.

A parable from Dr. Wayne Dyer:

A man comes to a village and asks people “ What kind of people live here?” He is asked what kind of people live where he came from. He replies where I come from the people are hateful, cruel, they treat you unfairly, and they are violent. He is told unfortunately that’s the kind of people that live in this town.

Another man comes to the same village and asks the same question. He replies where I come from the people are kind, just, they treat you nicely, and they are peace loving. He is told fortunately that is the kind of people that live in this town also.

FUTURE VISION OF ICGP.

We would like continue activities of ICGP including the annual Festival of Faith. In addition we would like to have more meetings so we are not seeing each other once a year. This may include SHURAS (mutual consultation meetings, Dialogs, and other projects.

Some of the features of ICGP's vision, in my humble understanding are:

- **ICGP does not advocate a new religion.** In working with other faiths, we will not only increase our understanding of others but will know more about our own faith. We will essentially become better Christians, better Jews, better Muslims, better spiritual beings. In working with others we will rejoice in their moments of bliss and share their moments of sorrow.
- **We will worship and glorify God in our own ways** and would not create the impression of superiority of one religion over the other. **We will not proselytize.**
God is no less generous in salvation than in creation. The God whom we meet in creation is generous in grace and rejoices in diversity – ‘O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all!’ [Ps 104.24] This creator God is the same saving God who wishes to lead all to perfection.
- **We will respect all faiths, their beliefs, their books, their symbols, and their traditions.** We will not be disrespectful, we will not insult, minimize, ridicule, or defame any faith with our words, actions, directly or indirectly.
- **We will strife for peace and justice.** “Justice is not a partisan issue, rather a basic value without which democracy as we know it dies”. Justice can only be served when it is applied equally to everyone, irrespective of religion, race, status, or citizenship. Without being involved in political issues we will speak up against any injustice, violence, and crime against innocent people.
- **We will think globally and act locally.** We will get involved in social welfare projects locally in cooperation with other local organizations. These projects to include: Poverty, environment, energy, fight against discrimination, fighting terrorism, eradication of nuclear armaments, Religious and ethnic tolerance and acceptance, and fighting injustice.

WE NEED YOU. Please fill out forms in the back of the program booklet and give us your feedback and comments and how would you like to be involved in this organization. How may we improve our future events and adjust our future vision so we may promote peaceful existence in our local communities.

We thank all the workshop presenters.

Dr. David McCreery, Keynote Speaker

Ms. Carmen Rubio, Mayor Potter's office

Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield, Judaism

Mr. Hogan Bays, Buddhism

Dr. Will Deming, Christianity

Dr. Khalid Khan, Islam

Mr. Amr Khalifa, Islam

Mr. Malik Bell, Bhai Faith

Sonal Shah, Dr. B.G. and Mrs. Pushpaben Salva, Hinduism, Hare Krishna presenter.

Mr. Gary Spanovich, meditation

Cody Loveland, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints.

Mrs. Angie DeRouchie, Church of Scientology

Scott LeMart, Seventh Day Adventist Church

THANKS for your participation. AUDIENCE. Without you this event would not be successful.

Rev. Dr. Hector Lopez to offer Interfaith Prayer.