

before. ... The only way we can break through is through the churches.”

“Rarely have the world’s religions spoken in unity as they did trying to prevent this preemptive war,” she says. “The pope said war is not valid anymore — the weapons are too horrible.”

All War is a Failure

Lucy McIver, clerk of the Eugene Friends Meeting, says in her statement, “all war is a failure — failure to believe and trust in the goodness at the core of humankind. ... We support strenuous efforts through diplomacy to secure international agreements and to remove the domination of militarism in our society. ... For those who believe that this war was the only way to bring about (peaceful) change, we remind them that diplomacy

EVOLUTION OF FAITH

Two Rivers Interfaith Ministries (TRIM)

formed in the late 1980s in response to anti-gay ballot measures sponsored by the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA).

“The crux of it,” says Irwin Noparstak, “was the liberal clergy and laity in town wanted to take a position around social and political actions to make it really clear that when things come up that ‘religious people support’ that there’s more than the right wing.

“What happened with TRIM,” adds Noparstak, “is that about five years ago the group became so diverse, so many new people came into TRIM who were coming from faith-based communities that are not political action communities ... It was hard for TRIM to take a position about things, so we created a subsidiary or affiliate group called Faith in Action.”

Today TRIM has about 200 members, and Faith in Action has about 45 to 50 members, says Noparstak.



IRWIN NOPARSTAK & JOAN BAYLISS

brought about the fall of apartheid and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall.”

A Sikh member of the group, Siri Karur Khalsa, says, “The world has gotten very small. Humanity is interdependent not only with each other but with this great earth that nurtures us all. ... We must set examples of deep respect for all that our children can emulate, or risk losing it all.”

Gregory Flint, senior pastor at First Congregational Church, says part of the challenge of peace is to step above “ideology, opinion, patriotic speeches and countering dissent.” In his statement he calls for “real religious reflection on the footprints we’re leaving on this earth.”

“So,” he asks, “could we stop waving the

flag and put away the protest signs and really talk in reflective, engaging ways, without the hubris of either self-righteous patriotism or breast-beating protest?”

Muslims Under Attack

Tammam Adi, director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Eugene, speaks out against the continuing backlash against Muslims at home and abroad.

“We are the ones under attack,” he says. “Under the cover of an endless ‘war on terror’ and so-called ‘wars of liberation,’ powerless Muslim communities here and overseas are being smeared, then persecuted, and finally assaulted and subjugated ... Right in front of our eyes we are seeing the extermination of Islamic culture — our antiquities, villages, orchards and homes — in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.”

Adi says that everywhere, including Eugene, some religious groups are teaching that “Islam is evil and needs to be eradicated. ... We ask you to openly confront, expose and condemn those with your communities who are so viciously attacking Islamic culture.”

“We Muslims are doing our part,” he says, “in confronting those few of us who hate others and call for violence. We continue to struggle against denial, hesitation and fear.”

Choosing Love or Hate

Dan Bryant, senior minister at First Christian Church, did not submit a statement at the press conference, but has been an outspoken critic of U.S. foreign policy from the pulpit, as well as a strong advocate for social services funding. In his sermon the Sunday following 9/11, he said:

“I fear that this dark side of our nation, if we do not expose and expunge it, may well control and consume us in our blind zeal to find blame and to get revenge. In times such as these we must not forget that we have a choice, always, when we are victimized by evil. And the choice is simply this: We can respond from love or we can respond from hate.”

Arun Toké of the group put his statement on the web at www.skippingstones.org along with the complete texts of others’ statements and information about upcoming interfaith meetings. Toké, a “born-again Unitarian Universalist Hindu,” calls for “Sept. 11th to be observed as a National Day of Interfaith, Intercultural and International Dialogue. We wish to put wings to nonviolence, understanding and cooperation between various

SPEAKERS COMING

Two nationally prominent speakers will be in Eugene next week to bring their unique perspectives on religion, politics and world peace. In addition, a series of lectures are planned by Muslim students on campus.

Ron Young, executive director of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, will be the keynote speaker at a community forum at 7 pm Tuesday, May 20 at the Hilton Conference Center.

The topic of the forum is “In Search of a Just Peace for Palestine and Israel — What Can We Do?” Respondents will be Shaul Cohen, associate professor of geography at UO; Munir Katul, retired physician and activist on Palestinian and Arab issues; and Steve Goldberg, attorney and co-chair of the National Lawyers’ Guild International Committee. Moderator will be Karen Kennedy, country specialist on Israel and the occupied territories for Amnesty International.

One focus of the forum will be on the Bush Administration’s new “road map” for peace in Israel and the region, says one of the organizers, Dan Goldrich. “This forum is designed to answer questions such as: What are the major requisites of and obstacles to a just peace? How do Americans best organize to overcome those obstacles? And how does American policy impact the lack of peace?”

Father Roy Bourgeois, MM, founder of the SOA Watch movement and recently returned from Iraq, will be in Eugene to speak at 7 pm Thursday, May 22 at 177 Lawrence Hall, UO. His topic will be “The School of the Americas and Iraq: Reflections on U.S. Foreign Policy.”

Bourgeois, a Catholic priest, worked with the poor in Bolivia for several years and knew two of the nuns who were murdered in El Salvador in the 1980s. He became aware of the relationship of the SOA with massacres, torture and assassination throughout Latin America. He has been arrested many times in nonviolent protests against the SOA and has spent four years in prison. For more information, visit www.soawatch.org

The **UO Muslim Student Association** is presenting a series of talks and discussions on “Justice: Islamic Perspectives on Peace and War” beginning at 6 pm Monday, May 12 in McKenzie 240 C on campus. Speakers will be Prof. Timothy Fianotti and Tamam Adi.

From 5 to 8 pm Tuesday will be talks by Ibrahim Hamide, Prof. Ibrahim Gassama, David Fidanque and Guadalupe Quinn, also in McKenzie 240 C.

Wednesday from 5 to 8 pm in Lawrence 177 will be a presentation on “Faces of Shock and Awe,” and talks by Prof. Shaul Cohen, Prof. Jane Cramer, Prof. Richard Kraus, and Prof. Carl Bybee.

Thursday from 5 to 7:30 pm in Gerlinger Lounge will be an Islamic Cultural Reception, a talk by Prof. Timothy Fianotti and a reading of a Rumi “Poem for Peace.”

segments of the human society, and to let it fly all over the world.”

The last paragraph of the joint statement of April 30 reads: “We issue this statement because we are challenged to witness our faith and we need to express our concerns over religious intolerance, the use of unilateral and preemptive military action, endless war, misallocation of monies, and the serious need to see that local social services are kept functioning.”

So was the press conference successful? “Thirty people showed up and it was a wonderful event,” says Deutsch. “The no-shows were the media, but it had great value for everyone present.”



SIRI KHAN OF SIKH DHARMA