



TIA News & Notes

March 2006

The Newsletter of the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance

Volume 11, Issue 1

8th ANNUAL MEETING Thursday, March 23rd, 7:30 p.m. Boston Avenue United Methodist Church

We have good news to report. We have more than doubled our membership in the past year. Our membership now stands at over 100. Thank you Brad Byers for your excellent work. We were also honored by the national organization by being nominated for the Bishop Murphy Award: "For outstanding grassroots work in exemplifying the belief that religion can and should be a constructive, healing force in public life." Our Treasurer, John Osborne, will report on the National Gathering and our award. There will be special guests to introduce, plans to share, including the announcement of monthly membership meetings, and our own Bill Wiseman award to present.

Please join us for this celebration of our interfaith movement, furthering democratic values, defending religious liberty, challenging hatred and religious bigotry, and working to reinvigorate informed civic life. We gather Thursday, 7:30 p.m. March 23rd at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, whose classic art deco tower graces Tulsa's skyline. The church is downtown at 13th and Boston.

Dinner with Barry Lynn

April 27th, 5 p.m. at Fellowship Congregational Church

Nationally recognized religious liberty advocate, the Executive Director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, Barry Lynn is traveling from Washington to be with us on April 27th. There is simply not a church state issue that Americans United has not been involved in since its founding in 1947. In the very center of these issues in recent years has been this attorney and United Church of Christ minister, Barry Lynn.

To give us time to break by 6:30 for the Holocaust Memorial service at Temple Israel (one mile west of Fellowship), dinner will be served from 5 to 5:30. Our time together has been designed as an opportunity for conversation with Barry, who will speak for about 20 minutes followed by questions from the audience. You may come any time during the evening, but if you want dinner (\$10.00) you will have to call 747-7777 to make a reservation. Reservations must be made by April 20th.

Fellowship Congregational Church is located at 29th and South Harvard, west side of the street, immediately South of Braums.

2006 Interfaith Holocaust Commemoration

April 27th, Temple Israel,
7 p.m.

"Children of the Holocaust: Their Lives—Their Legacy" is the theme of this year's program. Featured speaker is Dr. Robert Krell, world-renowned child survivor and distinguished child psychiatrist. Dr. Krell is professor emeritus of psychiatry at the University of British Columbia and co-author of *The Children of Buchenwald*, which tells the story of 426 young survivors.

Temple Israel is located at 2004 East 22nd Place (south side of Utica Square).

9th Annual Season for Nonviolence: Honoring the Legacies of Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Season for Nonviolence (SNV) is a 64-day period from January 30 through April 4 inspired by the 50th and 30th memorial anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was created by the Association for Global New Thought and Arun and Sunanda Gandhi. Launched in 1998 at the United Nations, its objective is to create an awareness of nonviolent principles and practices as a powerful way to heal, transform and empower our lives and communities. Watch for community events still remaining.

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tulsapeace.org/snvweb.html

"Operation Understanding,"

The Interfaith Youth Tour will be April 2 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Sites to be visited this year are Islamic mosque, B'Nai Emunah synagogue, St Pius X Catholic Church and Buddhist Temple. For more information call 583-1361.

"God Is One" Adult Education Curriculum is Now Available.

The National Council of Churches in a project co-sponsored by the Islamic Society of North America and Hartford Seminary is encouraging churches to undertake an Adult Education Study on Islam, using the resource *God Is One: The Way of Islam*.

This is a primer on Islam for Christians written by retired United Methodist minister Marston Speight and comes highly recommended by Christian and Muslim scholars.

A six-week long study guide for use in churches was written by Dr. Jay Rock, Director of Interfaith Relations, Presbyterian Church (USA). The study guide also encourages building of relationships between churches and mosques. For further information e-mail shanta@nccusa.org or phone 212-870-2560.

Public Radio Tulsa Adds
Interfaith Programming:



Check out "Sounds and Spirit" with Ellen Kushner, Sunday evenings at 6 p.m. and "Speaking of Faith" with Krista Tippet, Sundays at noon. Both may be found on your dial at KWGS 89.5

"Sacred Classics" with Stephanie Wendt is on Sunday mornings, 7 to 10 a.m. at KWTU 88.7.

CAIR offers

"Explore the Life of Muhammed."

The Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has launched a major educational effort called "Explore the Life of Muhammad" as a positive response to the worldwide controversy over caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

CAIR, along with other Muslim organizations and Muslim leaders, has denounced the violence in response to the caricatures. The year-long initiative will begin by offering people of all faiths a free book or DVD about the life and legacy of the Prophet Muhammad. Go to www.cair.com/Muhammad.

Report on clergy letter project and Evolution Sunday.

Michael Zimmerman, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, reports that the goal of 10,000 clergy signatures was reached and that nearly 400 congregations from 48 states participated in Evolution Sunday. Resources are available at www.uwosh.edu/colleges/cols/rel_resources.htm.

The Sherwin Museum of Jewish Art

This museum is a Tulsa jewel (2021 East 71st Street). Museum hours are Monday-Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. . Sundays, 1 to 5 p.m. (492-1818). Closed Saturdays

Security and Civil Rights.

On February 28 former Muslim Chaplain and U.S. Army Captain James Yee spoke at Harvard University, sponsored by the Harvard Islamic Society, the Asian-Pacific Law Students Association and the Pluralism Project. Chaplain Yee served at Guantanamo Bay and spoke of the challenges of learning first-hand about the abuses.

He responded by authoring policies designed to respect both civil rights and security needs. He was accused of espionage and held in solitary confinement. Eventually all charges were dropped and his record was cleared. His new book is entitled *For God and Country*.



Book Recommendations

The Left hand of God: Taking Back Our Country from the Religious Right by Michael Lerner. Along the same lines is OKC United Church of Christ pastor Robin Meyers's *Why the Christian Right is Wrong: A Minister's Manifesto for Taking Back Your Faith, Your Flag, and Your Future*.

Save Darfur Coalition

This Coalition includes over 150 faith-based, advocacy and humanitarian aid organizations dedicated to raising awareness of the genocide taking place in Darfur and promoting actions necessary to end it. Go to millionvoicesfordarfur.org.

**Conference on Spiritual Activism,
All Souls Church,
Washington D.C., May 17-20.**

Our economy teaches people that “the real world” is primarily about maximizing “the bottom line” of money and power and “looking out for number one.” Everywhere we look we find people acting to advance their own interests without regard to the consequences for others. And this causes a huge spiritual crisis—making it hard to sustain loving relationships, families and communities.

The Religious Right correctly saw there was a crisis but then blamed it on gays and lesbians or independent women, and most recently on all secular or liberal people.

But there is a crisis, and until there is a voice for spiritual progressives that can help people understand the source of the pain in their lives, the right will continue to shape public discourse. That’s why we need an interfaith grassroots Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP).

You can join even if you don’t come to this founding conference. For either go to www.Tikkun.org or call 510-644-1200 or 510-528-6250.

**Summer Internships at the
Pluralism Project**

The Pluralism Project at Harvard University is accepting internship applications for the coming summer. For further information go to their website, Pluralism Project.org.

**National Organization Hosts
New Radio Program:**

Rev. C. Welton Gaddy, President of the Interfaith Alliance, is the host of a new radio show which debuted on Air America Radio Network Sunday, January 15th. It will be heard weekly from 5 to 6 pm EST.

Called “State of Belief,” the program focuses on the positive and healing role of religion in public life, exploring that theme by illustrating the vast diversity of beliefs in America, while exposing both the political manipulation of religion and religious manipulation of government. Walter Cronkite and Diana Eck of the Pluralism Project were guests on the first show. For information about the show and listings go to www.stateofbelief.com.

New Air Force Religion Guidelines:

The new guidelines issued February 13th no longer caution top officers about promoting their religious views, the issue that caused the flap at the Academy in the first place. The guidelines were described as interim.

Military News at military.com

“Anytown, Oklahoma 2006

The camp this year will be July 9-15 at Heart O’Hills, Tahlequah. Anytown is open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. The camp, sponsored by OCCJ, promotes self-esteem, citizenship and leadership. For registration and further information call 583-1361.

A Message from Welton Gaddy

We are not just the opposite of the Religious Right

We are about: a broader vision for the nation; a more inclusive community; a more multifaceted political agenda; a more expansive understanding of justice; a more loving recognition of the meaning of family; a more respectful view of humankind; a more in-depth commitment to peace; and a more profound understanding of spiritual pilgrimage than simply stating the polar opposites of the Religious Right's extreme conceits.

Let us simply agree that moral motivations are major contributors to our passions and practices, but that our politics are just that—politics. We have no more right to identify our politics with God than the Religious Right. The politics of people involved in the movement of progressive religion are our politics—not God's politics. The Interfaith Alliance is deeply concerned with the meaning of religious freedom as well as the blessing and responsibilities inherent in it. We can find in advocacy for religious liberty a fundamental rationale for our positions on a wide range of social and political issues. For

the good of religion and for the good of the nation, we say to an intrusive government, "Stay out of our congregations with your partisan political rhetoric, electoral strategies, and organizing tools. Stay out of our temples, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras and churches with your political understanding of private issues. Keep off the benches of our high courts people who will weaken commitment to the principle that has contributed inestimably to the integrity of religion and the vitality of government. Don't change the nature of our democracy under the guise of bringing more religion and "morality" to our nation.

A truly progressive religious community demonstrates a strong commitment to religious liberty as absolutely essential to building a more civil and inclusive America. It is for that reason we are proud to have many non-religious people included among us, united against the divisive and intolerant agenda of the Religious Right."

--Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, President,
Interfaith Alliance, *The Light*, Winter 2006



In Memoriam

Fannie Hill: We give thanks and celebrate the life of Fannie Hill, former Retired Senior Volunteer Program assistant director and longtime Tulsa community leader. She and her husband, Ben, pastor of Vernon AME and a state representative, were leaders in Oklahoma's civil rights movement. Fannie died February 6 at the age of 101.

Tom Fox: We mourn the loss of the Christian Peacemaker in Iraq. Tom Fox combined a lightness of spirit, a firm opposition to all oppression, and the recognition of God in everyone.

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The Interfaith Alliance is a non-partisan, grassroots organization dedicated to promoting the positive, healing role of faith in civic life and challenging intolerance and extremism.

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Check out our web site
www.tulsainterfaith.org

When we change the models in our mind,
we change the results in our life.

-- Mark Victor Hansen

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