

Fall 2007

Volume II, Issue 1



Mission Statement

To enhance the understanding of Muslim cultures through educational and cultural activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences among people of diverse cultures.

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President's Corner

Assalam-Alaikum and Eid Mubarak.

What a year this has been! Developments at the international and national levels on the political, economic, religious and social fronts have occurred at an amazing pace. There has never been more of a need, than now, to reach out and better understand the diversity that exists in the form of mindsets, religions, cultures and perspectives. We at Crescent Peace Society (CPS) have tried, in our small way, to keep abreast of these changes and also to strategize for the future.

To this effect, we kicked off 2007 with a "retreat," inviting the youth of our community to sit shoulder-to-shoulder with the experienced members, and develop plans to further CPS' mission. I see that the key for the future of this, and all such endeavors, lies with the youth. Their active participation is what will ensure that this movement will not die down. The transition to the next generation is not only inevitable, in my personal opinion, it is mandatory. The cause and the message should always remain larger than the people who perpetrate it. As president, I have ambitiously tried to recruit the younger elements in our midst and cultivate their talents to strengthen the ideals that CPS stands for. What better nourishment for this potential resource to flourish, than the wisdom, experience and guidance of the seniors, who started and established the groundwork for this mission.

CPS has made some significant strides in this journey. We are preparing our second newsletter. Though published annually at the present, my goal is to see it transform to a quarterly affair. We have the expertise of Huma for this. Our website, www.crescentpeace.org, has a bold new face, thanks to the efforts of Umer Saeed and Shahryar Qadri. The site is updated regularly and provides links to the world of interfaith activities around us. We have been active participants in local and national interfaith activities, ranging from democracy and peace seminars, cultural film events in the Washington D.C. area, to lectures and book launches at local churches and at the Jewish Community Center. Our Ramadan *Iftaar* hosted people from all sections of our society, Muslims, Jews and Christians, with Fatima Chaudhri giving a heartwarming presentation on the concept of fasting. CPS is also collaborating with the Village Presbyterian Church in arranging a Muslim-Jewish dialogue featuring Akbar Ahmed and Judea Pearl.

My message, on this Annual Eid dinner, is none other than to present to this vibrant community an opportunity to make a difference! The want and the desire to enhance cross-cultural dialogue is there. The stage is set, whether it is CPS or any similar endeavor. The only thing stopping us is our own reluctance. Whatever the basis of this, it holds no grounds in comparison to the overwhelming need that exists for such an exchange, the paucity of which threatens to sever the fiber of our very existence. Let us not let this opportunity slip away. It would surely be such a waste!

Hussain Haideri

Facts about Islam:

- There are 1.6-1.8 billion Muslims in the world.
- Islam is the second-largest religion in the world, after Christianity.
- Indonesia has the world's largest population of Muslims, estimated to be around 196 million.
- The top six countries with the most Muslims, including India, are outside of the Arab world.
- At three million, Germany is estimated to have the highest Muslim population in Europe, comprising 3.6 percent of the total population.
- California has the highest Muslim population in the U.S.



Useful links for information about Islam and Muslims in the US:

IslamiCity

www.islamicity.com

IslamicWeb

www.islamicweb.com

BeliefNet

www.beliefnet.com

Council on American-Islamic Relations

www.cair.com

Muslim Public Affairs Council

www.mpac.org

Muslim Advocates

www.muslimadvocates.org

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

A year has gone by since the first installment of the Crescent Peace Society newsletter, which was met with positive feedback. Like the last edition, this newsletter is also filled with voices from different community members and age-groups.

The highlight of this newsletter is a group of essays written by the winners of the 2007 **Syed Farrukh Shabbir M.D. Memorial Scholarship**. These stories by young members of our community give a glimpse into the perspective of today's youth regarding peace and cross-cultural understanding. The "Medical Corner" features information from our resident expert, **Dr. Iftexhar Ahmed**, about strokes and how to prevent them. We are also introducing a new "Tech Talk" column compiled by **Umer Saeed**, which provides useful insight into the world of technology. An article by high school student **Shajiah Jaffri** talks about the importance of breaking stereotypes.

Our efforts are only as good as we make them. I would like to emphasize that this is *your* newsletter. We envisioned this to not only be a platform for CPS activities and events, but also a stage for community members to express their voices, concerns and ideas. I urge all of you to join me in fulfilling our vision by contributing to the newsletter, and using it as a platform to showcase your ideas. We are accepting submissions from everyone and about every topic. There are no boundaries except those we create.

We welcome all comments and criticisms. For more information about the newsletter, please feel free to contact me or any CPS officer.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Huma Khan

CPS Health Clinic and Iftaar

Crescent Peace Society's second annual health clinic and **iftaar** (breaking of the fast) was held at the Leawood Community Center during the month of Ramadan on Sunday, September 23.

About 155 attendees were present at the event, including prominent community members such as Leawood mayor, **Peggy Dunn**; **Gary Morsch**, founder and president of Heart to Heart International and Islamic community leader, **Ahmed Al-Shareef**.

High school student **Fatima Chaudhri** gave a speech about Ramadan and provided a humorous and engaging picture of how she spends iftaar with her family. CPS president **Hussain Haideri** also spoke about the importance of the month of Ramadan.

How I Spent Ramadan

Mahroosa Haideri

My name is Mahroosa Haideri and I'm ten years old. In my religion, Islam, we practice "fasting." Fasting means that we have to stay away from food and water. We wake up at sunrise and have anything we want. After we eat, we say our morning prayer – which is called **Fajr**.

After that, we start our day as usual. For me, it would be going to school. At school, I would not feel any different because I would be doing my work and activities all day. At lunch, I would either go to the library to read, or sit at the lunch table with my friends.

Interestingly, I did not whine or complain because the whole idea behind fasting is maintaining tolerance and staying away from our impulses.

After I came home, I would do my homework and by the time I would finish, it would be time to break my fast, called **iftaar**, which is at sunset. We say our evening prayers – **Maghrib** - and then eat a delicious feast.

This year, for Ramadan, I did about 15 fasts. There are 29 or 30 fasts in all that we have to complete. After Ramadan is over, we celebrate a holiday called **Eid**, in which we exchange gifts and congratulate everyone, because we are happy to have fulfilled our duties. Ramadan and Eid are very special holidays for the Islamic Community.





November 7-18th, 2007



The Festival of Faiths presents its Keynote Speaker Event...

Tuesday, November 13th, 2007 – 7:00 p.m.

The Daniel Pearl Foundation's
Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding featuring Professors

Judea Pearl & Akbar Ahmed

After Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and murdered in 2002, his family and friends came together to work toward a more humane world. **The Daniel Pearl Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding featuring Akbar Ahmed and Judea Pearl** grew from Professors Pearl and Ahmed's shared belief that reconciliation between Abrahamaic faiths can be achieved through frank and respectful dialogue, a critical component in addressing one of the world's major problems. For these highly personal, yet public, national and international dialogues, Professors Ahmed and Pearl were awarded the first annual "Purpose Prize" in 2006, honoring people over age 60 who have taken on society's biggest challenges.

Tickets can be purchased at www.festivaloffaithskc.org.



Syed Farrukh Shabbir M.D. Memorial Scholarship

The Crescent Peace Society established the scholarship last year to recognize Syed Farrukh Shabbir, a physician and a community leader, who passed away in 2006 shortly after returning from the Hajj. The scholarship is for a graduating high school student in the greater Kansas City area who has written the most compelling essay about the importance of peace and understanding in a pluralistic world.

The winner of the 2007 Scholarship was Laura Hochman from Sumner Academy. Laura is now attending the University of Kansas. The scholarship was for \$500. Runner-ups to the essay contest were Daniel Anderson from Blue Valley High School, who is attending University of Utah, and Whitney Howard from William Chrisman High School in Independence, Missouri. She is attending the University of Kansas.

HISTORY LESSON 101: CONNECT OR PERISH

Laura Hochman

To highlight the importance of peace and understanding in a pluralistic world, one need only begin to study the compelling illustrations provided by significant mergers of early civilizations. Such noteworthy interactions helped those civilizations stabilize, flourish, and prosper because the new stimuli rejuvenated resources of creativity, realigned perspectives to increase outward rather than inward productivity, and perpetuated a treasury of shared goals that created a harmonious network of coexistence, eventually rewarding their efforts with mutual prosperity. These early peace and understanding movements attained such historical notice and ultimately such phenomenal success that it is difficult to comprehend how their crucial awakenings to tolerance as a global ideal has been lost and largely ignored by so many successive civilizations. “We” have regressed to “I”, and once again must learn the only wisdom that can secure the legacy of humanity. Without this shared knowledge, passionate revival of significant dialogue to address our connections more readily than our differences, and the healing power of these unity initiatives, “we” will exact our own demise.

While there are no easy answers to the problems associated with achieving peaceful coexistence, communication and education are the only two platforms that offer universal applications and viable solutions. These components must be politically neutral and non-denominational in content. A global focus demands that dialogue have no boundaries. Educational curriculums that intensify cultural studies, promote universal human values, and portray humanity as an empowered entity because of its collective heritage, will be the catalysts that transform and once again enlighten the masses that peace and understanding is a shared responsibility and a desired means to an end. Our world is in sore need of a remedy that will foster appreciation rather than allow this terminal disease of mistrust to fester alarmingly among us.

We must establish common values and rights; true social justice dictates no one suffers indignity. Our words and actions must reflect the proof of our intentions, a focus that carefully analyzes, interacts, and acknowledges the whole of humanity. Cross-cultural goals must ultimately provide a universal stability, reinforced at every level by a satisfactory agenda of shared future perspectives. “We” never works alone; it works together, or it doesn’t work at all.

Perhaps in retrospect, it is not that we do not understand the important lessons we’ve learned thus far from history when evaluating peace and understanding in a pluralistic world, but rather that today we lack the impetus of survival that forced earlier civilizations to successfully connect or subsequently be destroyed. This may prove to be a most fatal luxury. We too must remember to “bend like the grass”, or we will break the chain of humankind; it will not withstand the strain of arrogant fools who mistake their uncontested privileges for rights. Our pluralistic world begs for community, demands an antidote to this diseased way of thinking. We must not simply aspire to achieve peace and understanding as global perspectives. History promises that if we fail to make these dire connections, we will surely perish.

COMPROMISE: THE FORGOTTEN NECESSITY

Daniel Anderson

An old Dr. Seuss rhyme tells of two creatures, one traveling east, the other west. Through happenstance, these two run straight into each other, and the first tells the second to move aside so he can continue east. The second refuses to budge, instead demanding that the first move so that he can move west. Both refuse to move, and stand there, glaring at each other as the landscape surrounding them slowly changes and progresses into the modern age, leaving them behind.

Compromise is at the heart of all civilization. From humanity's humblest beginnings, people have had opposing ideas on how to shape the world. Without compromise, people could never form cities or nations, or develop the advances in science, medicine, or engineering that benefit the modern world.

Across the globe, people fight against other ethnicities, religions, or nationalities, blaming them for society's ills. One culture dismisses another as backwards, violent, greedy, or immoral. Too often when someone commits a crime or acts in an immoral way, his or her victims hold the wrongdoer's entire group equally culpable. Excessive patriotism paints one's own society as flawlessly enlightened and other countries as foolish or evil. Radical religious leaders preach hate against others, declaring that only their narrow-minded view is right and all others are heathens, infidels, and a blight upon humanity, dismissing reconciliation as destructive 'moral relativism,' fearing that even the acknowledgment of the enemy as humans is detrimental.

How then can society solve the problem of absolutism that reduces all to black and white?

People do not need to abandon their convictions and beliefs in order to promote cooperation. All that they need to do is to stop seeing those with different views as monsters or subhuman. We do not need to agree with another viewpoint, but we need to recognize that those who disagree with us are still human beings and that if we look hard enough we can find a kernel of common ground between two sides of an issue. And if various factions can realize that without compromise there is no progress, then compromise becomes that much more likely.

For example, America's founding fathers all had different ideas on what the infant American nation should become. Slavery was one especially polarizing issue, yet the minds of the era knew that if they did not compromise on such difficult issues as slavery for the time being, there would be never be a United States. And while some people supported slavery before and after those fateful days of 1776, and others still fought against it, they all were able to temporarily put the polarizing issue aside to accomplish what needed to be done: forming a nation.

It is easy for people to be crushed by the emotions of polarization, the unwillingness to find common ground. If humanity wishes to better itself, then we must realize that without compromise, there can be no progress in the world. We must understand that compromise and teamwork are the first steps to community.

Whitney Howard

I initially recognized the vastness of the world at some point during my first day of high school. As I looked around, I was truly awed by the plethora of ethnicities and cultural differences that existed within those walls. Unfortunately, I also noticed a trend of indifference by the students. Though the preponderance of people at my school were tolerant of each other's differences, they weren't particularly concerned in expanding their boundaries of knowledge. High school was filled with the profusion of disparities, where an abundance of intellectual competence could be gained accordingly. It was then that I realized that humanity has progressed by finding indifference towards the beliefs of others, but accepting and appreciating one another has yet to be fulfilled.

This idea can be expanded to provide the concept of a pluralistic society. The world in itself is enriched with values, cultures, ethnicities, identities, and ideas. In particular, the United States has dramatically changed in regards to its religious landscape due in part to the progression of outside sources. The pluralism that we encounter in our day-to-day lives demonstrate the magnitude of our multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Understanding that we are all people striving for a universal goal of peace is the commencement of a new era. To further our extension of civilization, we must become entrenched in a culture of non-violence and acceptance. Thus, we must promote an expedition for a reciprocated understanding.

The impact of understanding in a pluralistic world is long-lasting. When we can effectively communicate our ideas without the threat of hatred and resentment, we allow ourselves to connect as human beings. Additionally, we solidify a progression for peace through action, instead of an ideological standing. To introduce this new era, citizens of the global community must readily accept an alteration of institutional and individual practices. This requires a pluralistic universe to demand accountability from society and the individuals that it is comprised of. As the Dalai Lama once stated, "you can develop the right attitude toward others if you have kindness, love and respect for them, and a clear realization of the oneness of human beings".

It is easy for humankind to halt progression because there has been a roadblock. Acceptance of pluralism is not easy, but this does not mean it cannot be achieved. There is no excuse for humans to continue to live inharmoniously when we were created so that we may coexist. Ultimately, hatred must be replaced with peace, indifference must be replaced with acknowledgement, and ignorance must be replaced with enlightenment. We should all take the opportunity to expand and explore our abilities in becoming effective and peaceful citizens of the global community. Let us come together for the sake of humanity through prayer and action, and embrace our differences. Indeed, it is possible to live in a peaceful, pluralistic world, but there must be a continuous movement to provide for such. This movement starts with me, and it starts with you.

Medical Corner: Strokes

Iftexhar Ahmed, M.D.

Director, Stroke Center, Research Medical Center



Stroke is a medical disease in which part of the brain gets damaged, resulting in severe problems with body functions, coma or even death. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and the second most common cause of death in the world. A stroke takes place every 25 to 30 seconds, and annual incidence of stroke is more than 750,000. About 25-30 percent of those patients will die within 30 days of the onset of stroke. Current estimates show that there are about 5 million stroke survivors.

Stroke is a major public health problem in the country. Immediate stroke care costs more than \$30 billion annually, not including the cost of care in nursing homes and loss of productivity. A conservative estimate of the total cost puts it above \$100 billion.

Surprisingly enough, despite these staggering statistics, very few people know about symptoms, signs and causes of stroke.

Stroke Types: There are two types of Stroke. The first, called **Ischemic Stroke**, is caused by blockage of one of the arteries supplying blood to the brain, causing death of the brain tissue beyond the blocked artery. The occlusion of the artery is caused by cholesterol or a blood clot or clots circulating from outside the brain, such as the heart or arteries in the neck. About 85 percent of all strokes are this type. Death occurs in 25-30 percent of these cases within 30 days, the remaining 50-60 percent are prone to severe disabilities, and 10 percent may recover to their previous health state.

The second type of stroke is caused by bleeding in the brain, which can result from high blood pressure or from taking certain drugs, among other causes. It comprises of 15 percent of all strokes. About 50-70 percent of people who suffer from this type of stroke do not survive, and the possibility of disabilities is much higher.

Treatment: Stroke, also known as a brain attack, is a medical emergency. All patients with signs and symptoms of a stroke must be hospitalized immediately. Drugs can be given within three hours to reverse the stroke, and a procedure to dissolve the clot in the brain or retrieve the clot from the small arteries in the brain can be done up to nine hours after the stroke has occurred. Drugs such as aspirin and blood thinners, and rehabilitation also play a major part in the stroke treatment process.

Stroke Prevention: There are several causes of stroke and much can be done to control them.

Non-Modifiable Causes

- Age and gender: Strokes in women are more likely to cause death and disability than in men
- Race: African-Americans are more susceptible to stroke, mainly due to the high incidence of hypertension and some genetic conditions

Modifiable Causes

- Controlling blood pressure
- Refraining from smoking and drugs
- Lowering and controlling cholesterol, diabetes and alcohol consumption
- Keeping body weight to the ideal range
- Exercising regularly
- Eating fish, vegetables and fruits several times a week

Tech Talk

It's a Dangerous [Digital] World Out There...

Umer Saeed

Ever notice that your personal computer performance has slowed down or it unexpectedly stopped working? Or sometimes you get a popup message about some malicious file that needs to be quarantined? Well, it could be that your PC has been victimized by a virus, a worm, **Spyware** or **Adware**. What does all that mean and how did your computer get infected?

Here is some information that will help you understand what it all means.

What is a virus?

A computer virus, according to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, is "a computer program usually hidden within another seemingly innocuous program that produces copies of itself and inserts them into other programs or files, and that usually performs a malicious action (such as destroying data)." Two categories of viruses, **macro viruses** and **worms**, are especially common today. Computer viruses are never naturally occurring; they are always man-made. Once created and released, however, their spread is not directly under human control.

Worms

Worms are very similar to viruses in that they are computer programs that replicate functional copies of themselves (usually to other computer systems via network connections) and often, but not always, contain some functionality that will interfere with the normal use of a computer or a program. The difference is that unlike viruses, worms exist as separate entities; they do not attach themselves to other files or programs. Because of their similarity to viruses, worms are often also referred to as viruses.

What is a "Trojan Horse"?

Named after the wooden horse the Greeks used to infiltrate Troy, a Trojan horse is a program that does something undocumented which the programmer intended, but that the user would not approve of if he or she knew about it. According to some people, a virus is a particular case of a Trojan horse, namely one which is able to spread to other programs. According to others, a virus that does not do any deliberate damage (other than merely replicating) is not a Trojan. Finally, despite the definitions, many people use the term "Trojan" to refer only to a non-replicating malicious program.

Spyware

Spyware is Internet jargon for any data-collection program that secretly gathers information about you and relays it to advertisers and other interested parties. Adware usually displays banners or unwanted pop-up windows, but often includes spyware as well. You can unknowingly install spyware when you install new software, especially those that are free and shared, for example, LimeWire, BearShare, KaZaA or iMesh. Many of these programs are intended to track your Internet browsing habits, such as frequented sites and favorite downloads, to provide advertising companies with marketing data. Some spyware programs, such as CommonName, MarketScore, and Gator, can adversely affect your computer's performance.

*Information compiled from Indiana University's IT services
<http://kb.iu.edu/data/glos.html>*

Book Review - "Journey Into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization"

by Akbar Ahmed

Hussain Haideri

I am at a loss to decide what has been more exhilarating for me. The amazing book that professor Ahmed has written, or the honor he bestowed upon me by asking me to review it. Unselfishly, the former wins with a huge lead.

It has been a treat to read this very classic narrative, which is a simple yet elaborate account of first-hand experience of the professor's journey into the various cultural, political, organizational and educational facets of the world's second largest religion, Islam.

What makes this book so interesting is that it is written as a travel-story, or a *safarnama*, as called in Urdu, that weaves the impressions and thoughts of Akbar Ahmed, a Muslim, with those of his young non-Muslim companions. It thus lends to us, in the luxury of our homes, a blend of cross-cultural experiences of how Islam and its various aspects present itself and are perceived.

The book describes the setup of religious and educational institutions from Deoband, Ajmer and Aligarh in India, to the *madrasas* in Pakistan to the modern structures in Cairo. Akbar Ahmed and his team recall their visits to holy shrines and mosques all over the globe, and narrate their conversations with imams, teachers and students. He also describes his meetings with some powerful and influential world leaders from political and religious backgrounds, and his candid conversations with them.

The book is written with a natural flow so unique to Akbar. He proudly calls this his best work to date and I do not doubt it. The writing is a brilliant transformation of information collected from a multitude of sources, interweaved with his own perception and analysis and then formatted in a style that makes it interesting, bold, real and first hand. It addresses pertinent issues like the value of education in Islam, which lays tremendous emphasis on the need to obtain "*ilm*," or knowledge, at all costs and it lays out the various avenues being utilized by Muslims to achieve this religious obligation. There is a great section about the struggle within Islam to balance tradition and fundamentalism with modernity and moderation.

The book reviews three models of Islam: the **Sufis**, the **Deobandis/Wahabis** and finally the **Aligarh** school of thought, giving a factual description of each faction. We understand how some cultural traditions are being perpetrated as religious rituals and seek to understand their roots and origins. In the section "Who is defining Islam," professor Ahmed displays his scholarly expertise of aptly introducing a question and then presenting the explanations in a way only he can achieve. He dwells on sensitive topics like *jihad*, terrorism, the role of women in Islam and the perpetual debates of the Shi'a and Sunni aspects and perspectives, with wisdom, intellect and realism that would silence even the difficult-to-satisfy critics.

Finally, the narration is beautifully punctuated with real life photographs that make you feel you are watching a movie with the text serving as a beautiful complementary commentary.

I would recommend this eloquent and insightful study of Islam to all who desire a balanced, unbiased and elaborate view of this great religion, from a figure who has clearly emerged as one of the world's leading authorities and a reliable voice in this field.

Other interesting and pertinent books on Interfaith/Cross Cultural/Social issues:

1. **Reza Aslan:** *No God but God*
2. **Saleem H. Ali:** *Peace Parks*
3. **Mohsin Hamid:** *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Perspectives

Breaking Stereotypes

Shajiah Jaffri

In summer 2006, my family and I had the opportunity to travel to Mecca, Saudi Arabia to perform **Umrah** (a short pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year). It was my first time traveling to the Middle East, and I was very excited. But at the same time, I was nervous. I had no idea what *Umrah* was. All I knew was that in Saudi Arabia I would have to wear **hijab** (head covering) and more conservative clothing such as long shirts and loose pants.

I've grown up in America and I am used to the lifestyle here. The concept I had of Saudi Arabia was that it was extremely conservative and repressive. This image was based on media reports about the people of the Middle East being radicals and Islamic fundamentalists. The women have to stay in the house and can't work. The image I had of a couple in Saudi Arabia was of a husband striding forward arrogantly while his wife follows him obediently, head bowed and clothed in flowing black robes and a veil.

When we arrived in Saudi Arabia the only places I spent time in outside the hotel room, was the **Ka'ba** mosque or the shopping mall near our hotel. As soon as you enter the mosque where the Ka'ba was, you see the people, the lights, and then a small, black box-like building. Visiting and seeing the Ka'ba was surreal. If anything unites the Muslims, it's the Ka'ba. When one visits it, it doesn't matter if they are Sunni or Shi'ite. The only thing that matters is worship and prayer of one God. The whole experience was spiritual and peaceful. Outside the mosque, Mecca was a bustling city. The atmosphere differed from that in the Ka'ba because this was the real Saudi Arabia.

When the trip came to an end, some of my misconceptions were cleared. Women in Saudi Arabia can work, but with other women in girl's schools or as doctors, and they don't silently trail after their husbands. In fact, many couples were walking hand in hand with their families. The women were elegant in their long robes, and they walked proudly next to their husbands chatting with them.

Sometimes the media makes it seem that the Middle East is full of Islamic radicals and fundamentalists. There are people from both factions, but not every person walking down the street or praying next to you is one or the other. I do admit, not every impression I had was false. Saudi Arabia is much more conservative than I am used to, growing up in America. The atmosphere in the mosque was peaceful, while the city was loud and busy. It is true women cannot vote, but then again, the government is an absolute monarchy; no one can vote. Women can't drive, either. But these aren't rules set by Islam, as most Westerners believe. These are rules set by the society, and the government isn't changing them. Islam doesn't tell women to stay home. That is how the Saudi society interprets the religion and makes sure that the Saudi Arabian women are still dependant on their husbands in some ways. Driving, as everyone 16-year-old knows, is a sign of independence.

Westerners criticize these restrictions and blame the religion, but we need to remember it's not the religion. Islam allows women and people in general many liberties, but those liberties can be taken away once society firmly believes their version of the religion is correct and the government is inactive in changing society's interpretation. Or it could be that the government is satisfied with the way its people think because it keeps them in power.

Before my trip, my impression of Saudi Arabia was based on what I had seen in the media and heard from others. If I hadn't have traveled to the country, I would still think the same way. Fortunately, I did travel there and I saw the country with my own eyes. We must all be careful not to let our misconceptions get the best of us and just believe what we're told or shown without trying to know the truth. Knowledge helps open our eyes and empowers us, and having knowledge can keep false impressions from forming.

Crescent Peace Society

11th Annual Eid Celebration Dinner

Friday October 26, 2007

7:00 – 10:00pm

Doubletree Hotel

10100 College Boulevard

Overland Park, KS 66210

Key Note Speaker

Professor Saleem H. Ali

University of Vermont

"Islam and Conflict Resolution: Ecological Perspectives on Educational Reform"

Enhancing peace and cross cultural communication using the

Gold Sponsorship: \$500

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Recognition in the program with a table of eight.

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For information and reservation please call:

Hussain Haideri: 913.814.9295

Anab/Abdi Nur: 913.451.9355

Shaheen/Iftexhar Ahmed: 913.491.5509

Nadia Saeed: 913.481.1751

Dr. Saleem H. Ali is Associate Dean for Graduate Education at the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Natural Resources, and on the adjunct faculty of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies. He is also on the visiting faculty for the United Nations mandated University for Peace. He recently completed a detailed study, titled "Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan," under a grant from the United States Institute of Peace. In October, 2007, Seed magazine chose him as one of eight "revolutionary minds" for his work on "peace parks" and his efforts at developing an environmental science curriculum for Islamic schools.

Professor Ali received his doctorate in Environmental Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), an M.E.S. in environmental law and policy from Yale University, and his Bachelors in Chemistry from Tufts University (summa cum laude).

More information about Dr. Ali is available at: <http://www.uvm.edu/~shali>

CPS 2007 Award Winners:

Peace:
Lama Chuck Stanford
Kansas City Interfaith Council

Community Service:
Khawaja AZ-Zubair Masjid Al-Inshara

Journalism:
Steve Kraske
Political Columnist,
Kansas City Star;
Host, NPR Up to Date

Business:
Arshad and Javed Chaudhri

Education:
Rushdie El-Hussein
Muslim Scholar

Special Recognition:
Walt Bodine
Talk Show Host,
KCUR

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