

IONA PACIFIC

COMPASS



PHOTO: ADELE LEWIN

IP BREAKS GROUND IN INTERFAITH BRIDGING WITH MOTHERS

IP Postdoctoral Fellow, Rosa Sevy, PhD, conceived and coordinated a highly innovative program for mothers to bridge individuals and communities. This EmbraceBC “interfaith bridging” program was made possible by funding provided by the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada. The five-session program from January to March brought together mothers from a diverse range of religious, ethnic, and national backgrounds. Under Dr. Sevy’s and her colleagues’ leadership, the mothers bonded so well that a second series was launched in May, supported by a competitive grant awarded by the Isaac and Sophie Waldman Endowment Fund. A third series is planned for the coming academic year. Word of the success of this IP initiative is spreading: similar programs bridging mothers are emerging around the Province.

IONA PACIFIC HOSTS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE: SCRIPTURES IN MEDIEVAL IBERIA

Medieval Spain was a critical site for religious and cultural creativity and conflict, where Christianity, Judaism, and Islam underwent profound developments that continue to affect our world. On June 6, 2011 Iona Pacific Inter-religious Centre hosted an international scholarly conference at VST featuring distinguished researchers from Spain, the United States, and Canada. “Scriptures in Medieval Iberia: Literature, Language, and Sacred Text in a Multi-religious Society” was co-sponsored by Iona Pacific, the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies at UBC (Okanagan campus), La Universidad de La Rioja (Spain), CILENGUA (Centro Internacional de Investigación de la Lengua Española, Spain), Green College at UBC, and the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures at SFU. The conference featured simultaneous audio and visual

interpretation in English and Spanish for all participants, with the benefit of two translators and a portable, state-of-the-art, wireless transmission system.

IP INVITED TO COLLABORATE WITH SFU'S WOSK CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE IN FALL 2011

In the 2011 Fall Term IP Director Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum will be a part-time Guest Faculty member at Simon Fraser University's experiential "Semester in Dialogue" Program. Four VST students will join 12 upper-level SFU undergraduates from the humanities to the sciences in a 15-credit course offered downtown at SFU's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The course is "Religion, Spirituality, Contemplative Inquiry, and Social Action." It will be co-taught by SFU Professor and Wosk Centre Academic Director, Dr. Mark Winston, the world's leading expert in bees and pollen; SFU Associate Prof. Heesoon Bai, an innovative education philosopher, who is an expert in Buddhism and Daoism; and IP Director Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum, who specializes in Jewish and inter-religious studies. This multi-disciplinary learning program "addresses principal challenges for contemporary education: to inspire students with a sense of civic responsibility, encourage their passion to improve society, and develop innovative intellectual tools for effective problem solving. Each semester we develop an original and intensive learning experience that uses dialogue to focus student education on public issues." The course will serve as a laboratory for IP's integrated approach to research, social action, and contemplative inquiry.

IONA PACIFIC WELCOMES VISITING SCHOLARS

Iona Pacific will host a series of Visiting Scholars for courses, public lectures, and continuing education workshops in the coming academic year on critical themes in the place of religion in the contemporary world. Dr. Aryn Sajoo, a distinguished Muslim political philosopher, is a Visiting Scholar at SFU and the University of Victoria's 2011 Distinguished Lecturer on Islam. Dr. Sajoo will offer a public lecture, "Public Islam: Citizenship, Identity, Anxiety," on Tuesday, July 12 at 7:00 pm at VST. Dr. Sajoo's Summer School course, "Faith and Modernity: Islam in a Secular Age," will be offered July 11 – 15, 2 – 5 pm. On September 21 – 23 Dr. Elliot Wolfson, Lieberman Professor of Hebrew & Judaic Studies at New York University, will offer two lectures and a workshop. His topics will be mysticism, messianic speculation, and time, dreams, and consciousness. Dr. Wolfson will be welcomed as IP Visiting Scholar, VST Visiting Distinguished Lecturer, and a Visiting Lecturer at UBC. In March of 2012 Iona

Pacific will host a day-long conference on compassion and religion by the internationally renowned scholar and author, Dr. Karen Armstrong. This program, and several other programs featuring Dr. Armstrong, will be co-sponsored principally by the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue at SFU, along with Iona Pacific, the Dalai Lama Centre, and the Greater Vancouver Compassionate Cities Network. At press time, arrangements for two additional IP Visiting Scholars were pending.



IP YOUTH CO-CREATES INTER-RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO SOCIAL ISSUES

IP Youth is emerging as a vital context for students on the UBC Campus from diverse religious and ethnic community backgrounds to work together innovatively and effectively on issues such as extreme poverty locally and globally, micro-finance, integrating refugees into Canadian society, and inter-religious cooperation. This year IP Youth responded to a "micro-credit challenge" and organized an African art silent auction aimed at supporting two non-profit organizations in Africa for entrepreneurial youth. As well, in cooperation with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, IP Youth coordinated a local initiative to support the UN Millennium Development Goals. The "Congregations Act" campaign raised funds to purchase malaria nets to save lives in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This year IP Youth also engaged in an intensive

study of micro-finance under the mentorship of an expert. For more information about IP Youth, contact ipyouth@ionapacific.ca.

DANIEL PEARL FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH IONA PACIFIC ON VIDEO PROJECT

The Daniel Pearl Foundation (DPF) and Iona Pacific have been collaborating for the past year on a video project to promote critical thinking about international conflict. The DPF was formed in memory of journalist Daniel Pearl to further the ideals that inspired Daniel's life and work. The Foundation's mission is to promote tolerance and understanding internationally through journalism, music and dialogue. In keeping with IP's commitments to collaborative, critical, and constructive approaches to religion's place in our world, the research phase of this project has entailed extensive consultations with a range of figures in religious, academic, and other contexts, including international policy and critical media scholars affiliated with UBC's Liu Institute for Global Issues. The video project, which is funded by a grant from the DPF, is expected to begin production later this year.

IP ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

In addition to summer courses and lectures by visiting scholars, IP offers degree and certificate courses throughout the academic year. Together with VST's Indigenous Studies Centre, VST's Iona Pacific Centre offers innovative M.A. and Th.M. degrees in Indigenous and Inter-religious Studies, as well as courses on various topics informed by the principal wisdom traditions that guide IP's work: Indigenous religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the fall of 2010 VST Prof. Sharon Betcher offered a new course and two public events on spirituality and suffering, and Dr. Robert Daum offered a course on "Sacred Texts in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam." In the spring of 2011 Dr. Harry Maier and Dr. Robert Daum collaborated to offer an advanced seminar on early Christian and Jewish responses to life under the Roman Empire.

IP'S STAFF AND TEAM IN THE COMMUNITY AND ACADEMY

IP Team members gave formal presentations in a broad range of contexts in the wider community in the past academic year. In 2010-2011 IP staff have been privileged to speak at Har El Synagogue (West Vancouver), Sisterhood of Temple Sholom (Vancouver), UBC Arts One Program,

UBC Law & Society Program, Annual Study conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (BC Synod), United Church of Canada "Behold!" Conference, National Council of Jewish Women, Hummingbird Festival, City of Vancouver Annual Commemoration of Eid ul-Adha at City Hall, St. Mark's College "Theology on Tap" Series, Quest University (Squamish), Christ Church Cathedral, St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, Metro-Vancouver Jewish-Christian Dialogue, St. Mary's Kerrisdale Anglican Church, Canadian Memorial United Church, UBC Hillel, UBC Chaplains Association, St. John the Divine Church (Victoria), Beth Tikvah Synagogue (Richmond), Multifaith Action Society, and other contexts.

IP PRESENTED TWO "COMMONS HOUR" SPEAKERS

As part of a series of community conversations on critical issues hosted at VST this year, IP presented two speakers. Dr. Roshan Thomas, an optometrist and international development specialist, established the first early childhood education school in Afghanistan. She spoke about how her Muslim faith inspires her work. At another program, Dr. Gershon Growe, a David Suzuki Ambassador and Medical Director of the BC/Yukon Division of Canadian Blood Services, spoke about Jewish teachings regarding environmental responsibility.

ABOUT IONA PACIFIC INTER-RELIGIOUS CENTRE

Iona Pacific Inter-religious Centre at Vancouver School of Theology www.ionapacific.ca seeks to strengthen the capacity for diverse religious and spiritual wisdom traditions to engage each other collaboratively, critically, and constructively on local and global issues through research, social action, and contemplative inquiry.

Iona Pacific is one of three Centres at Vancouver School of Theology, which have distinct and complementary missions. Its sister Centres are the Indigenous Studies Centre and the Centre for Public and Pastoral Leadership. Established and funded by Vancouver School of Theology, IP looks to the wider community to help sustain its innovative programs.

WHO WE ARE: PEOPLE AT IONA PACIFIC

Director

Robert A. Daum, Rabbi, Ph.d., Assoc. Prof. of
Rabbinic Literature & Jewish Thought

Postdoctoral Fellow & Program Coordinator

Rosa Sevy, Ph.D.

Senior Intern

Aliya Hirji, B.A.

2011 Adler Intern

Dan Clegg, M.A. student in Psychology

IP Youth Team Leaders 2010-2011

Paul Davidescu, Sara Eftekhari, Tariq Kassam,
Derek Mascarenhas, Behzad Memarzadeh, Zach Segal,
Ben Cappellacci, Mohammed Atashnak, Alejandra Castaneda

2011-2012 Research Assistant

Elyse Brayzel, VST student

IP / VST Development Team

Deborah Eaton-Kent and Dana Dekoven

IP Community Advisory Council

Ms. Shirley Barnett, Dr. Paul Burns, Mrs. Daphne Francis, Chief and
Councilor Wade Grant, Bishop Michael Ingham, Mr. Amin Jamal,
Dr. Aziz Khaki, Chief Moses McKay, Dr. Deanna Nyce,
Mr. Abraham Sacks, Mr. David Schwartz, Esq.,
Mr. James E. White, and Dr. Wendy Fletcher (ex-officio),
Dr. Robert Daum (ex-officio)

The IP Program Committee is a diverse group of educators and
community leaders, including representatives of VST Faculty
Council and the Indigenous Studies Centre, Jewish Educator Betty
Nitkin, Muslim community leader Maryam Abbasi, and IP staff.

The IP Religious Leaders Circle will be forming later this year.

IP's academic programs draw on the research and teaching faculty at
Vancouver School of Theology; IP Visiting Scholars; IP
Visiting Lecturers, Authors, Artists, and Contemplatives; and
Interns from VST and other academic institutions.



Please support Iona Pacific's work.
Contact Deborah@vst.edu or 604-822-9809
Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre
at Vancouver School of Theology
6000 Iona Drive
Vancouver, BC V6T 1L4
www.ionapacific.ca
ph: 604-827-4742
info@ionapacific.ca