



MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



NEWS RELEASE

CORRECTED

November 3, 2014

[Previous release misnamed event date of **November 9** as a Saturday. It is in fact a **Sunday**.]

MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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International Speakers Come to Minnesota to Commemorate Our 25 Years of Muslim-Christian Dialogue

A quarter-century of positive formal engagement between the Islamic Center of Minnesota and the Minnesota Council of Churches will be celebrated this November. The regular dialogues, which predate 9/11 by over a decade, are historically noteworthy. This anniversary is being celebrated with a member of the Islamic Juridical Council of North America and a coordinator of Interfaith Relations for national Christian organizations.

Where were you 25 years ago? In 1989 we experienced the “fall” of the Berlin Wall and the “Revolutions of 1989” which led to the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union. The internet was in its infancy and cell phones existed only in spy movies.

Thankfully, there were those who realized that Muslim-Christian dialogues and relationships were worth investing in 25 years ago. Had we waited until September 11, 2001, it might have been more difficult. In a world with ISIS, Islamophobia flare-ups, persecuted Christians and Koran-burning, the importance of having these regular conversations and building relationships across our religions cannot be overstated. For 25 years Minnesota Council of Churches and the Islamic Center of Minnesota have given Minnesotans opportunities to understand each other more and fear each other less.

Marking the significance of this event are a national and international speaker on interfaith relations.

“The Minnesota Council of Churches has the state’s broadest set of interfaith relationships,” says Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin, the Council’s executive director. “We are proud of our partnership with the Islamic Center of Minnesota and gratified that speakers like Dr. Badawi and Dr. Rock also recognize just how important it is to recognize 25 years of successful dialogues.”

“The Islamic Center is the oldest Islamic organization in the State of Minnesota. Our 25-year-old partnership with Minnesota Council of Churches in the field of interfaith dialogue has been a very rewarding and educational experience. We are grateful that we have the opportunity to hear from two masters in their field as they engage us in thinking about

the significance of this historic moment – and what it means to our future,” said Owais Bayunus, Director of Interfaith Affairs at the Islamic Center of Minnesota.

The two organizations are celebrating their anniversary on Sunday, November 9th.

**Muslim-Christian Dialogue 25th Anniversary
Featuring Dr. Jamal Badawi and Dr. Jay T. Rock**

November 9, 2014, 5:30pm - 8:30pm

Islamic Center of Minnesota

1401 Gardena Ave. NE

Fridley, MN 55432

Register here: <http://bit.ly/MCDialogue>

The event will begin with traditional evening prayer at the mosque, which non-Muslims are invited to watch. Then we will hear from two speakers who are flying in for this auspicious occasion.

Dr. Jamal Badawi and Dr. Jay Rock (pictures and biographies below) are keynote speakers.



Dr. Jamal Badawi is "Professor Emeritus" at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where he served as Professor of both Management and Religious Studies.

During its May, 2008 Convocation, Saint Mary's University granted him an Honorary Doctorate of Civil law. The university's citation made mention of his promotion of "a better understanding of Islam" and contribution to "civil society around the world."

Dr. Badawi completed his undergraduate studies in Cairo, Egypt and Masters and Ph.D. degrees at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Dr. Badawi is the author of several works on Islam, including books, chapters in books and articles. Among topics he covers are "Apostasy: Is it a capital crime?", "Muslim and Non-Muslim Relations" and "Muslim Contribution to Civilization." In addition to participation in lectures, seminars and interfaith dialogues in North America, Dr. Badawi has been invited to be a guest speaker on Islam in 41 other countries.

He is a member of the Islamic Juridical [Fiqh] Council of North America, The European Council for Ifta and Research and the International Union of Muslim Scholars. He has been serving as a volunteer Imam of the local Muslim community in the Halifax Regional Municipality since 1970. He served also as Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Islamic American University in Detroit and the consultative [Shura] council of the Islamic Society of North America.

Dr. Badawi is father of 5 children and grandfather of 23.

Dr. Jay T. Rock



Dr. Jay Rock served, from 2003-2010, as the Coordinator for Interfaith Relations for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). From 1987 to 2003 he directed the Interfaith Relations Office of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and from 1980-87, was on the staff of Church World Service.

Dr. Rock holds a Ph.D. in History and Phenomenology of Religions from the Graduate Theological Union, and an M.A. in Christian Theological Studies.

He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). His experience of ecumenical and inter-religious relations, and perspective on the issues, while rooted in North America, has also been shaped by short-term visits and dialogues in the Southern Caribbean, Israel/Palestine, Africa, South Asia, and Europe, and by many conversations sponsored by the World Council of Churches, especially the Thinking Together project.

Now retired, Dr. Rock teaches from time to time, and lives with his spouse of 45 years, writer Judith Rock, in Sarasota, FL.

To interview Rev. Canon Chamberlin or Dr. Jay T. Rock, contact Minnesota Council of Churches, (612) 230-3211. To interview Mr. Bayunus or Dr. Badawi, contact Owais Bayunus at (651) 428-9956.

About Minnesota Council of Churches

The Minnesota Council of Churches' mission is to manifest unity in the church and to build the common good in the world. The Minnesota Council of Churches programs align with three broad categories: welcoming refugees, mobilizing the faith community to engage in public policy, and strengthening communities through relationships and understanding. For more information, visit www.mnchurches.org

About Islamic Center of Minnesota

Islamic Center of Minnesota (ICM) is the oldest and the largest Muslim organization in Minnesota, providing comprehensive services to the Muslim and non-Muslim community. From the free AlShifa Clinic, a food shelf, Muslim education to children and adults (non-Muslims), providing five daily prayers, Friday prayers and Eid prayers, and a Muslim marriage facility, to participating in Joint Legislative Coalition with other Abrahamic faiths, the Islamic Center has a speaker bureau responding to calls and invitation to speak on the basics of Islam and current World Affairs. The Islamic Center has been involved in interfaith dialog with people of other faiths.

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