

INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF LINN COUNTY

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 17, 2014

Members present (10): Tom Capo, Ashok Chawla, Charles Crawley, Brian Daugherty, Alan Fletcher, Brenda Mitchell, Hassan Selim, Todd Thalblum, Joan Thaler, and Jen Yukl

Guest (1): Robin Berman of Riverview Center

President Todd Thalblum called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

INSPIRATION

Ashok Chawla shared about the doctrine of Ahimsa (non-violence). According to the Hindu scriptures, “Non-violence in thought, word, and deed is the highest morality.” Without the true spirit of non-violence towards all forms of life, there can be no genuine peace in the world. A Vedantic vision of the world is like this:

- Where harmlessness to all creatures is the highest culture, service to the poor is the highest worship, compassion is the highest religion, truth is the highest law, and love for all God’s creatures is the highest philosophy.
- Where political, social, and religious institutions and their leaders strive tirelessly to accept people of all races, colors, and creeds, and respect their faiths and beliefs.
- Where all forms of life are revered as various expressions of the supreme Lord and ahimsa is the governing law.
- Where educational, political, and economic systems are designed to assist individuals to unfold their highest potential.
- Where mothers, fathers, teachers and elders are revered, children are brought up with self-esteem, and the young are taught to respect the intrinsic human values.

[From an article titled “Vedanta, a System to Unfold Divinity” by Bansi Pandit – author of “Hindu Mind”]

RIVERVIEW CENTER – Creating a Community Free of Violence

Robin Berman (LGBT + Sexual Assault Advocate) addressed us about the services offered by Riverview Center, a non-profit organization supporting victims of sexual violence in Linn, Benton, and Jones counties. The services include a 24-hour hotline, peer counseling/support groups, medical advocacy, legal advocacy, and violence prevention education. Robin shared details about these services and reviewed important notes about listening/supporting a sexual assault victim if they turn to you. Currently, the Cedar Rapid’s office has four full-time staff members and some volunteers. Two brochures were provided. One lists specifics about listening and support – with examples of what *not* to say and what to say that is beneficial. The other gives further details about their services. Robin asked us to make these brochures available to our communities of faith.

MINUTES of March 20, 2014

Motion by Joan Thaler to approve as submitted – Second by Brenda Mitchell – Carried

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE– Alan Fletcher, Treasurer/Chair

1. **Financial Report:** Written report of receipts & disbursements – 3/20 thru 4/17 – was provided. Cash balance as of 4/17/14: \$16,352.37 [Checking = \$1,574.18 / Money Market = \$14, 778.19]
2. **Rent payment of \$300:** Alan explained that this included \$200 past due rent from 2013.

FINANCE COMMITTEE continued...

3. **Telephone Service:** During process of creating a budget, Alan discovered that Mediacom payments were delinquent and phone service has been disconnected for over a year. To get phone service again from Mediacom, we will need to pay past due charges of \$195.14, a service call of \$99.95, a monthly cost of \$39.95 + fees and taxes, and sign a minimum one-year contract. New service includes free modem, voicemail, and phone book listing. Old number is gone so will be assigned a new one. CenturyLink was contacted as an option; they offer a three-year contract at \$85 a month and could get us our old number. **Discussion led to the decision to remain without phone service.** Communication Committee will remove (319) 399-1330 from the website and contact Stuart Williams about putting in forwarding link from the email contact address of info@irclc.org to the email address of our current president.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE – Brian Daugherty, Chair

1. **Children of Abraham:** In addition to the events listed below, Brian announced that Chris Seeman (former Prof. of Religion at Coe / now Assoc. Prof. of Theology at Walsh University in North Canton, OH) will be speaking on June 8 (2 to 4 pm) at Kesler Auditorium, Coe College. Topic has not been firmly set, but will likely be about different interpretations of Biblical texts and Biblical prophecy.
Schedule of Events for Children of Abraham: All dates are on Sundays / Time – 2:00 to 4:00 pm
 - May 4 – *How Each Religion Sees the Other* – at Temple Judah
 - August 24 – *Schools of Thought: Differences Within Each Tradition* – at the Mother Mosque
 - November 2 – *Concepts of God* – at St. George Eastern Orthodox Church
[Speakers at all events: Fred Shaheen, Taha Tawil, and Todd Thalblum]
2. **Ethical Perspectives on the News / Sundays, 11 am on KCRG, Channel 9:**
Cedric Lofdahl could not be at April's IRC meeting – but emailed that he will provide a current program schedule after his team meets to confirm programming at the end of April.
3. **University of Religion:** No update

EVENT COMMITTEE – Charles Crawley and Allen Fisher, Co-chairs

1. **Report re April 7th Holocaust Memorial:** Todd Thalblum reported that St. Mark's Lutheran was a great facility. This event and all other speaking engagements of Cesare Frustaci were well attended.
2. **Thanksgiving Service – Monday, Nov. 24 (7pm) – at Unity of Cedar Rapids**
3. **Annual Meeting update:** Hassan Selim reported that the Islamic Center agreed to host the meeting. Decision made that the date will be the Thursday, December 18, with dinner at 6 pm, if this works for the Islamic Center.
4. **Event Committee meeting:** was scheduled for May 15, 6:30 pm, before 7 pm IRC meeting.

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE – Brenda Mitchell and Jen Yukl, Co-chairs

1. **Website status:** Site has been launched, but needs updated information. Committee met prior to this IRC meeting and will meet again, sometime in May, to learn how to post information.
2. **Newsletter:** Last issue was November 2013. Jen reported that hope is to get issue done this summer. Ashok will look at current template to see if another program can be used – one that will still work for remaining pre-prints and download nicely to the website. Brenda started discussion about need for articles for newsletter and website. Charles Crawley described the unique Lenten experience practiced at Christ Episcopal this year and offered to write an article.
3. **Database:** Email being added and ground addresses verified as membership forms are received.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **April 23 Summit / CR Civil Rights Commission:** Update given on speaking segment by Tom Capo and Rodney Bluml – at 2:20 pm. Tom encouraged us to attend if possible and Ashok Chawla stated that he will be able to attend. Todd Thalblum will give a blessing at beginning of this event (8:30 am). Reminder given that IRC members will receive special rate of \$5 (vs. \$50). Register online with code that was announced.
Summit: Building Inclusive Communities, One Neighborhood at a Time
Wednesday, April 23 (8:30 am to 4:30 pm) – Cedar Rapids Convention Complex, Double Tree
[Information and registration details at www.cedar-rapids.org/civilrights]
2. **Tom Capo moving:** Tom announced that he has been called to a Unitarian Universalist church in Naperville, IL and will be leaving CR at the end of July. He is looking for someone from People’s Church to take his place on the IRC council. It was noted that the vice-president position will soon be vacant; Todd Thalblum will look at the bylaws for the protocol to fill a vacated officer position.

ANNOUNCEMENTS of other events in Cedar Rapids

1. **Annual Middle Eastern Dinner – Sunday, April 27 (serving sessions: 11 am to 2 pm and 3 pm to 6 pm):** Cost – \$12 for adults, \$6 for children / Location – Islamic Center, 2999 1st Ave. SW
2. **Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, May 2 (11:45am–1pm):** “Voting Rights in the United States” with Paul Gowder, University of Iowa College of Law
See <http://interfaithallianceiowa.org/events/intersections/> for details about registering for lunch.
3. **Experience *the Word Come to Life – a Presentation of The Saint John’s Bible – May 2 through June 8:*** Prairiewoods / Details and hours at www.Prairiewoods.org
4. **Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training – Thurs., May 29 & Fri., May 30 (9am–5pm):** Unity of CR
Register by May 15 at www.MarthaCreek.com
5. **Extraordinary Leadership in Healthy Congregations – Saturday, May 31 (10:30am–4:30pm):** Unity, 3791 Blairs Ferry Rd NE / Love offering; no registration required / More info at www.MarthaCreek.com
6. **“The Work” of Byron Katie, *Living in Joy – Loving What Is* – Sunday, June 1 (Noon to 3pm):** Unity of CR
No registration required; donation / More info at www.MarthaCreek.com
7. **Spring Eco-Programs at Prairiewoods:** See www.Prairiewoods.org for program information.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, May 15 (7:00 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center
Hassan Selim will give the inspiration on May 15.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm:

Motion to adjourn by Charles Crawley – Second by Joan Thaler – Carried

Respectfully submitted by

Jennifer Yukl,
Secretary