

THE SALAAM NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT, 2021

Since the start of COVID-19, *The Salaam Network* (TSN) has been conducting most of its activities virtually via zoom. Given below are descriptions of the 28 **PROGRAMS AND PRESENTATIONS** and 1 Film, sponsored by TSN in 2021:

- 1) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on January 6, 2021. There was a discussion on “*Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters,*” by Omid Safi.

- 2) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on January 27, 2021. There was a continuation of the discussion on “*Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters,*” by Omid Safi.

- 3) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on February 10, 2021. There was a discussion on the movie “*The Message,*” (1996) produced by Moustapha Akkad.

- 4) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on February 24, 2021. There was a) a brief discussion on the movie “*Islam: Empire of Faith*” (2000), produced by Robert H. Gardner; and b) a presentation on *Islamic Calligraphy* by **DR. SALEEM SEYAL**.

- 5) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on March 10, 2021. There was a discussion on *the Edicts of Prophet*

- Muhammad and Muslim-Christian Relations in early Islamic history*, led by **DR. BRAD BOWMAN**, Professor of Islamic History, University of Louisville.
- 6) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on March 24, 2021. There was a presentation and discussion of “*What Does It Means To Be A Muslim Today?*” by **DR. RIFFAT HASSAN**).
 - 7) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTER: CHARLES UPTON** (Poet, Sufi, Executive Director, Covenants of the Prophet Foundation). There was a presentation and discussion on *the Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christian World*, April 14, 2021.
 - 8) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTER: DR. CRAIG CONSIDINE** (Scholar of Islam, author, filmmaker, faculty member of the Sociology Department of Rice University). There was a presentation and discussion on Dr. Craig Considine’s book “*The Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View*,” April 28, 2021.
 - 9) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on May 12, 2021. There was a viewing of, and discussion on, the movie “*The Sultan and the Saint*” (2016), directed by Alex Kronemer.
 - 10) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTER: DR. LEONARD SWIDLER** (Professor Emeritus of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue, Temple University; one of the Founders of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim interreligious dialogue in the U.S. sponsored by the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, Washington D. C. 1978-1984; a co-founder and editor of *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies*). There was a presentation and discussion on “*The Dialogue Decalogue*,” on June 9, 2021.

- 11) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on June 22, 2021. There was “unpacking” of **DR. SWIDLER’s *Ten Principles*** and suggestions were offered by Group members about some changes re: authoritarian language as well as the content of specific Principles. The written account would be circulated among the Group members for further reflection.
- 12) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on July 14, 2021. A critical discussion led by **DR. GREGORY HUTCHESON**, Professor of Spanish, University of Louisville, on the movie: “*Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain*,” (2007), directed by Robert H. Gardner.
- 13) “**ISLAM AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION**” - A Film directed and edited by **MEHR HASSAN**, was shown and discussed at All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 4036, Brownsboro Road, Louisville, on July 18, 2021. (This Film was jointly sponsored by the Social Justice Committee of All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation and *The Salaam Network*).
- 14) On August 9, 2021, **DR. RIFFAT HASSAN** was the featured speaker at a zoom meeting sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana for participants of the Inter-Regional International Visitor Leadership Program sponsored by the U. S. Department of State on the topic of Women in Politics and Civil Society. Dr. Hassan spoke briefly about her history of international advocacy and told the participants about the setting up of *The Salaam Network* and its valuable educational programs offered free-of-charge to the community. After her presentation, international participants offered their comments and expressed the desire to continue the conversation with Dr. Hassan and *The Salaam Network*.

- 15) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTER: DR. MATTHEW PIERCE** (Professor of Religion, Centre College, Danville). There was a discussion on “*Dual Religious Identities,*” on August 11, 2021.
- 16) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTERS: DR. ROHULLAH AMIN** and **CHARLES PRINTZ** (Dr. Amin is a medical doctor, a scholar of Islam, a human rights activist, currently teaching at Hamburg, Germany, Charles Printz is a human rights attorney based in New York). Dr. Amin talked about the ground realities in Afghanistan and about own perspective on the historical background of his people and country; Charles Printz talked about diplomatic initiatives underway to help at-risk Afghans, August 25, 2021.
- 17) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited guests, was held on September 8, 2021 There was a discussion on the Introduction to the Original Edition, Introduction to the Vintage Edition, and Chapter One: Islam as News, of **EDWARD W. SAID**’s classic work “*Covering Islam - How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World,*”).
- 18) *The Salaam Network* educators **DR. RIFFAT HASSAN** and **JIM AALEN** participated in a zoom meeting sponsored by **the Offices of Identity and Inclusion and Campus Ministry at Bellarmine University, Louisville**, on September 22, 2021. The purpose of the meeting was to engage students in a conversation around **ISLAMOPHOBIA**, particularly in the wake of 9/11 attacks.
- 19) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on September 22, 2021 (There was a discussion on “*Islam as a Source of Inspiration,*” a Film directed and edited by **MEHR HASSAN**).

- 20) **DR. RIFFAT HASSAN** made a presentation on “*Muslim Women: Qur’anic Teachings Versus Cultural Practices,*” at a zoom meeting of Christian-Muslim Dialogue of Lexington, Kentucky, on September 25, 2021.
- 21) **DR. RIFFAT HASSAN** was interviewed via zoom by **Edward Stourton** for BBC Radio’s “**Ethics and Religion**” program broadcast on September 26, 2021. The topic of discussion was the current concern about education for women and girls in Afghanistan following the Taliban’s takeover of government and the Islamic theological perspective on this matter.
- 22) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on October 13, 2021, viewed **MORGAN ATKINSON**’s film “*Statues: What Do We Stand For?*” This film is about race and public art in contemporary Louisville and explores its racial culture in general and a history of local public statuary including Barney Bright’s *Derby Clock* in the 1970s, the Ill-fated Ohio River Fountain in the 1980s, and the installation of a statue of York in 2003. A slave of William Clark, York made pivotal but ignored contributions to the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The central study richly narrates the heated and polarized debate regarding *John B. Castleman On Horse* in the Cherokee Triangle. The distinguished Louisville-based documentary filmmaker Morgan Atkinson was present at the meeting to answer questions and take part in the general discussion.
- 23) There was a Featured Presentation by **DR. RIFFAT HASSAN** on “*Understanding ‘Honor Crimes’ in Muslim Societies: Case Study of Palestinian Women,*” (Film reviewed: “*Women of Freedom*” directed by Abeer Zeibak Haddad) at the *Tafakkur* Muslim Film Festival sponsored by International Center of Cultural Studies (ICCS), National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University in Taiwan (October 23, 2021).

- 24) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTER: ADELITA BEDZETOVIC BEWLEY** (Member of The Threshold Society affiliated with the Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi Foundation, trained as a Whirling Dervish, post-graduate student of Islamic Studies and Arabic). On October 27, 2021, Adelita, a 28-year-old Muslim woman from Bosnia talked about her experience of being a refugee first in Germany and then in the U.S., and shared her family’s memories of the displacement of Bosnian Muslims by Serbians and the massacre in and around the town of Srebrenica on July 11, 1995, when over 8000 Bosnian men and boys were massacred. Adelita talked about her mixed feelings as a person with more than one homeland, who loved Bosnia though she had never lived there, and her struggle to understand and embrace her divided identity and heritage.
- 25) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTERS: DR. DENNIS NEYMAN** and **DR. FARIBA KASHAN** (Dr. Neyman is Director and Community Outreach Coordinator of *The Salaam Network* who taught in Isfahan, Iran, from 1975-1979; Dr. Kashan is Iranian-American, Professor of Mathematics at Kentucky State University, and a leader of the local Iranian and Shi’a community). On November 17, 2021, Dr. Neyman and Dr. Kashan shared their American and Iranian perspectives respectively on the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the taking of American hostages by Iranian students; they also discussed Edward Said’s criticism of the U.S. media coverage of these events.
- 26) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on November 17, 2021. There was a discussion on Chapter Two on “**The Iran Story**” in Edward W. Said’s “*Covering Islam – How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World,*”; **GUEST PRESENTERS: DR. DENNIS NEYMAN, DR FARIBA KASHAN.**

- 27) **DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE SERIES** hosted by *The Salaam Network* (via zoom): **PRESENTER: DR. SYED ZAFAR MAHMOOD** (Distinguished Indian government official and diplomat, Founder of many philanthropic organizations, God’s Grace School System and Interfaith Coalition for Peace; member of two South Asian Muslim delegations participating in peacemaking projects sponsored by the U. S. Department of State, dedicated scholar and author) Dr. Mahmood made a presentation on “*The Preserved Tablet*,” mentioned in the Qur’an (Surah 85: *Al-Buruj*: 21-22) which he regards as “a strong directive for maintaining interfaith affection.” This event took place on December 2, 2021.
- 28) **INTERFAITH STUDY GROUP** (via zoom) meeting of members of *The Salaam Network* and All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, and Invited Guests, was held on December 15, 2021. There was a discussion on Chapter Three on “Knowledge and Power” in Edward W. Said’s “*Covering Islam - How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*,”; reference will also be made to “*The Return of Islam*,” and “*The Roots of Muslim Rage*,” by Bernard Lewis, and “*The Clash of Civilizations?*” by Samuel Huntington).

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION IN 2021

In 2021, TSN has been recognized for its excellence in quality performance and its valuable contributions toward making the Beloved Community Whole as can be seen from the following:

The Better Business Bureau awarded TSN as an Accredited Charity

The Great Non-Profits Seal of Approval as Top Rated for 2000

The Great Non-Profit Seal of Approval as Top Rated for 2021

The Gold Star Silver Transparency Award for 2021

PARTICIPATION IN SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS:

TSN scholars and educators have been invited to participate in professional Programs and Presentations sponsored by significant National and International Institutions or Organizations:

1. **THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE** through the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana (Sponsor of the Inter-Regional International Visitor Leadership Program, August 9, 2021).
2. **BBC RADIO IN LONDON, U. K.** ("*Ethics and Religion*" program broadcast, September 26, 2021).
3. **INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF CULTURAL STUDIES (ICCS), NATIONAL YANG MING CHIAO TUNG UNIVERSITY**, Taiwan, Taiwan (October 23, 2021).
4. **THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH** (granted TSN rights to present its own video production to UUA membership, June 2021).

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

In August 2021, TSN's new website was launched under the direction of Mr. Azhar Aslam, CEO of Emergent Software Solutions, a group of seasoned IT industry professionals comprising Project Managers, Technical Team Leads, Software Engineers, Designers, QA Experts, and Technical Writers. This company which was founded in 2009, is located in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

TSN's new website can be accessed at <http://www.salaamnetwork.org>. It is a professional-level website which provides detailed information about TSN **Programs and Presentations** on a yearly basis from 2016 to 2023. In a section entitled "**Meet Our Network**" it provides brief biographical information about TSN Office-bearers, Advisors, Consultants, Facilitators, Key Presenters, Guest Presenters and Panelists. Letters of recommendation from partners, participants, supporters, and community members have been posted in a section entitled "**Testimonials.**" The

website also has sections entitled “Home Page,” “Upcoming Events,” “Members’ Writings,” “Privacy Policy,” “Recent Achievements,” “Public Statements,” and “Annual Reports.”

LIST OF DISTINGUISHED GUEST SPEAKERS

1. Charles Upton, Sufi, Poet, Executive Director, Covenants of the Prophet Foundation, Lexington, Kentucky.
2. Dr. Craig Considine, Lecturer, Sociology Department, Rice University.
3. Dr. Leonard Swidler, Professor Emerita, Temple University, Pioneer of Interreligious Dialogue in the U. S.
4. Dr. Matthew Pierce, Professor of Religion, Centre College, Danville, Kentucky.
5. Dr. Rohullah Amin, from Afghanistan, a Scholar of Islam, a Human Rights Activist Leader, currently teaching in Germany.
6. Charles Printz, Immigration Attorney and Human Rights Lawyer.
7. Adelita Bedzetovic Bewley, Bosnian-American, post-graduate student of Islamic Studies and Arabic.
8. Dr. Syed Zafar Mahmood, Islamic Scholar and Philanthropist from Delhi, India.

LIST OF MOVIES REVIEWED

1. “*The Message*,” (1996), directed by Moustapha Akkad
2. “*Islam: Empire of Faith*,” (2000), produced by Robert H. Gardner
3. “*The Sultan and the Saint*,” (2916), directed by Apex Kronemer
4. “*Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain*,” (2007), directed by Robert H. Gardner,
5. “*Islam as a Source of Inspiration*,” (2021), directed by Mehr Hassan

6. “*Statues: What Do We Stand For?*” (2021), produced by Morgan Atkinson

LIST OF BOOKS REVIEWED

1. *Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters*, by Omid Safi.
2. *Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View*, by Dr. Craig Considine
3. *Covering Islam - How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, by Edward W. Said

LIST OF PAPERS REVIEWED

1. *What Does It Means To Be A Muslim Today?*” by Dr. Riffat Hassan
2. “*The Dialogue Decalogue*,” by Leonard Swidler
3. “*Dual Religious Identities*,” by Professor Matthew Pierce
4. “*Muslim Women: Qur’anic Teachings Versus Cultural Practices*,” by Dr. Riffat Hassan
5. “*Understanding ‘Honor Crimes’ in Muslim Societies: Case Study of Palestinian Women*,” by Dr. Riffat Hassan
6. Presentation on “*The Preserved Tablet*,” by Dr. Syed Zafar Mahmood
7. “*The Return of Islam*,” by Bernard Lewis
8. “*The Roots of Muslim Rage*,” by Bernard Lewis,
9. “*The Clash of Civilizations?*” by Samuel Huntington