



The Common Good News
Regis University Institute on the Common Good

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Politicians throughout the country are calling for bi-partisan and multi-partisan efforts to address the many difficult issues facing the nation. I applaud those intentions. But it is never easy to reach across the aisle or the infamous “green lines” that mark many cities. It takes courage and commitment.

Several years ago, the Institute hosted a lunch for individuals working on a multitude of issues. In the room were a small group of oil and gas officials, cattlemen, environmentalists, Jewish and Islamic leaders, business leaders, union officials and others. They heard from and dialogued with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate John Hume. He spoke about how he worked to build trust in a situation where little existed, what he did to stay committed, healthy and energized through times of failure, and how he worked toward compromise and dialogue when those inside his own community accused him of “selling out” to the other side. Everyone in the room shared similar stories of being ostracized from their own communities. Their only betrayal was their belief that by speaking to the “enemy” they might find common ground for the common good.

President Obama has already been chastised for some of his appointments in his efforts to build consensus and reach out to a broad spectrum of ideas. For his inaugural he has been challenged for choosing Evangelical minister Rick Warren to lead the invocation and the openly gay Bishop, Gene Robinson, of the Episcopal Church to pray at the kickoff event for the inaugural festivities. For me, this is a bold beginning that calls us each to reach out to others who think differently than we do.

I encourage you to support those leaders who take the first step.

~ Paul Alexander, Ph.D.

ICG HIGHLIGHTS

What is happening at the Institute on the Common Good?

Post Election Dialogue

To the perception of many, America is a divided nation politically. Addressing this concern using the potential of dialogue to bring greater understanding and sense of interpersonal alignment, the Institute on the Common Good partnered with the Office of the Associate Provost for Diversity, University Ministry, Student Activities, and the Peace and Justice Program to host a post-election dialogue on Nov. 5.

Regis University students, faculty, staff and community members attended the dialogue, conducted in the Ranger Grille.

The facilitator, Leilani Rashida Henry, founder of Being and Living Enterprises, initiated ground rules that encouraged people to start from a place of deep listening, respect, the suspension of judgment, and an assumption of right intentions, or viewing each person as operating from a place of good intentions. The dialogue quickly went beyond superficialities to racism, and participants also reflected on the use of the term socialism as it applied to the election.

Regis University student Jimmy Sengenberger, who heads the Regis College student Republic group, told the *Denver Post*, “No matter what we do, under the partisanship and polarization, we’re still Americans and we can come together to discuss issues cordially.”

Maricor Coquia, another student participant and editor of the campus newspaper, was dismayed at the election, even though her candidate won, and lamented the way she had been treated by other students. This feeling was strong in the room as the dialogue explored the personal attacks on both sides of the political divide.

Before the last two elections, Fr. Michael Sheeran, S.J., called on the community to engage in respectful dialogue. He writes in an epistle on dialogue: “When we disagree, we bring to (the) disagreement our respect for others’ integrity, we seek to understand fully what they are saying, and we seek a place where we can find common ground. Even when we are convinced that our position is correct, we carry out our disagreements with civility and respect for those on the other side, knowing that we can best convince others through love, expressed through friendly persuasion. Not quite the approach advocated in our political, media and popular cultures — but it is the call given to us by our loving God.”

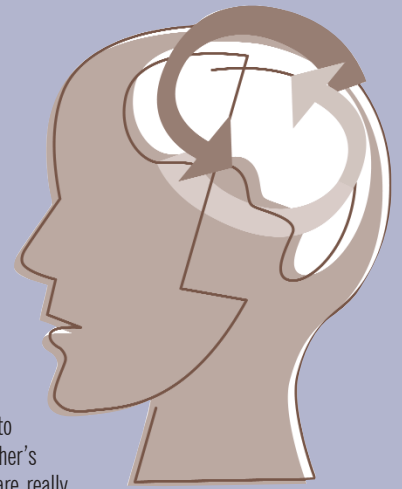
Read the *Denver Post* story at www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/cj_10958915. Jimmy Sengenberger wrote an article for the the campus newspaper, the *Highlander*, about the dialogue. Read his article, “Race Dominates Post-Election Diversity Dialogue” at www.icgregis.org/goto/Regis_Politics_2008.

DIALOGUE TIP OF THE MONTH

David Kantor, a family systems psychologist who has taught at Harvard and other major universities, developed a tool very useful for participants and facilitators of dialogue. Kantor describes this tool, the Four-Player System, as having four roles played in a healthy group or family, not necessarily by the same person at all times. The four roles are move, follow, bystander and oppose. Bill Isaacs, one of the leaders in the field of dialogue and founder of Dialogos International, LLC, defines the positions in the following way in his book, *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together*:

- A mover intends direction, discipline, commitment, perfection and clarity but sometimes comes across as omnipotent, impatient, indecisive, scattered and dictatorial.
- An opposer intends courage, integrity, correction, protection and survival but sometimes comes across as critical, complaining, blaming, attacking and contrary.
- A follower intends completion, compassion, loyalty, service and continuity but sometimes comes across as placating, indecisive, pliant, wishy-washy and over-accommodating.
- A bystander intends perspective, patience, preservation, moderation and self-reflection but sometimes comes across as disengaged, judgmental, deserting, withdrawn and silent.

It is important to look past the initial negative connotations that the positions may have and look for the genuine intentions. In a healthy conversation, all four roles are played and provide a balance. No role is left out and participants are free to transition from role to role. Awareness of the roles during a dialogue can offer an understanding that can allow for a greater ability to suspend judgment as, according to Isaacs, “we can learn to set aside our reactions to the noise of another’s communication and listen for what it is they are really trying to say.”



The next time you are in a conversation, attempt to become aware of the four player system. Is there a person moving the conversation at a given time? Is there someone opposing that movement? Are you providing the perspective or silence of a bystander? Are you contributing the compassion or loyalty of a follower? You might also wonder about what role tends to irritate you. Do you perceive another or yourself as acting judgmentally, wishy-washy, blaming, complaining or indecisive? And if so, what positive role might that be playing in the conversation?

DIALOGUE RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

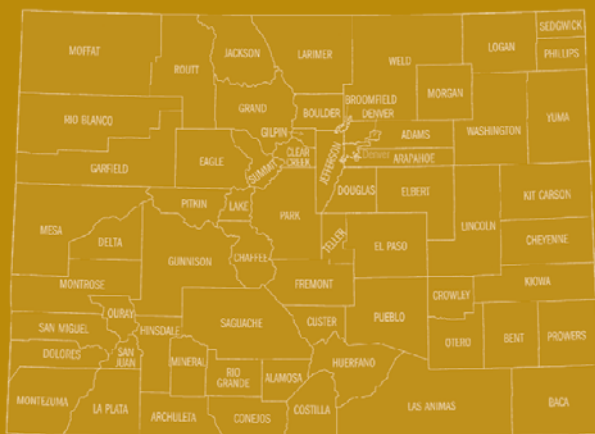
Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together (an excellent book on the basics of dialogue)

www.amazon.com/Dialogue-Thinking-Together-William-Isaacs/dp/0385479999

A dialogue in the movie *Dances with Wolves* that Isaacs mentions in his book: Notice the quality and flow of the conversation and the deep listening.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5NRf3JP5u8

AROUND THE STATE



Established in June 2003, the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping develop moral and cultural values in our society by promoting tolerance and dialogue. The Multicultural Mosaic Foundation believes that diversity is a strength within the community and that, as a community, people have a lot to learn from one another, which can help them grow without undermining their own identities. Like the Institute on the Common Good, the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation also believes that through listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values. The Multicultural Mosaic Foundation offers social, cultural and educational activities to help the community further the identification, protection and preservation of those cultural values considered to be of outstanding value to humanity and contribute to the establishment and promotion of cross-cultural tolerance and dialogue in the community. The Institute on the Common Good supports these goals, and has partnered on several occasions with the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation.

When Fr. Thomas Michel, S.J., who headed the Jesuit Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome, visited Regis he also met with the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation. Most recently, Paul Alexander, director of the Institute on the Common Good, was among the keynote speakers for the 5th Annual Dialogue and Friendship Dinner sponsored by the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation on Oct. 30.

Mormon/Evangelical Dialogue

On Wednesday, Oct. 29, the Institute on the Common Good sponsored a “Mormon and Evangelical Dialogue” in the St. John Francis Regis Chapel. The dialogue focused on the theology within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Evangelicals, highlighting what each of the two religions have in common, their differences and how they can get along despite their differences. Robert L. Millet, a Brigham Young University professor of ancient scripture, and Rev. Gregory C.V. Johnson, an Evangelical minister and founder and president of Standing Together, a non-profit ministry that exists to advance biblical unity and spiritual transformation in Utah, also answered questions from attendees.



Rev. Gregory C.V. Johnson, an Evangelical minister and Robert L. Millet, a Brigham Young University professor

Other Fall Highlights:

University of New Mexico Symposium

Paul Alexander was a keynote speaker at a University of New Mexico conference on the role Collaborative Governance could play throughout the state of New Mexico. The conference was sponsored by the University of New Mexico’s Consortium for Collaborative Public Policy, a newly formed network of institutes, centers, and individual faculty, staff and students who share a commitment to informed, productive decision-making on issues of public policy.

Straight Talk Dialogues

In October, the Institute on the Common Good joined Julie Graves, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Colorado, to host a community dialogue and research study called “Straight Talk.” “Straight Talk” focused on the social challenges homosexuals face living within our ever-changing society. Fifteen participants were selected for the research. Eight of the selected individuals attended four dialogues held at Regis University’s Lowell campus while the other seven individuals participated in online surveys. The resulting research report and dissertation should be available later this year.

Update on Regis – School – Community Partnership

The Institute on the Common Good continues to partner with Denver Public Schools to support restorative justice and conflict resolution initiatives thanks to a grant from the Colorado Office of Dispute Resolution. The project started working with North High School and Lake Middle School and is now partnering with two additional schools – Lincoln High School and Kunsmiller Middle School.

In October, the ICG facilitated community dialogues at North High School and Lake Middle School, thanks to the support of AmeriCorps VISTA, Ruth Jones and the DPS restorative justice coordinators, Ben Cairns and Gail Valeta. The ICG also hosted a workshop on restorative justice for DPS and the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) of Denver on Oct. 6.

Student Discernment evening

Before the November election, the Institute on the Common Good partnered with University Ministry to co-host an evening of discernment. ICG staff trained peer ministers on methods of discernment, then peer ministers led the experience in St. John Francis Regis Chapel. Election materials on the amendments, referendums and candidates were provided and participants experienced a time for individual reflection on a particular voting struggle. The evening ended with communal discernment on the issues.

Some materials used in the evening can be found online from the Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good at www.catholicsinalliance.org

Association of Dispute Resolution Conference

Faculty members of the Regis Chapter of Mediators Beyond Borders gave a presentation at the Alternative Dispute Resolution Conference Oct. 24. Jean Stracy, Dr. Elenie Opffer and Nan Waller-Burnett spoke about Mediators Beyond Borders and the work the Institute on the Common Good is doing in the local community around restorative justice and conflict resolution.

Students in a conflict resolution class that the ICG is supporting at North High School attended to see a Navajo Peace Circle demonstration, which is a model of restorative justice. There was also a luncheon presentation by Ambassador Dennis B. Ross, counselor and distinguished fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Regis University faculty Dr. Adrianna Karch and Dr. Mike Spangle also attended the conference.

For more on the conference, please visit:

www.coloradojudicialinstitute.org/downloads/ADRCConference08.pdf

MARK YOUR CALENDARS Upcoming Events

Father Juan Molina will speak at Regis University

St. John Francis Regis Chapel, 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 (Free)

Father Juan Molina, O.Ss.T., is the Advocacy Program coordinator for the Southwest Region of Catholic Relief Services, responsible for outreach to dioceses, religious and civic organizations, coalitions and institutions in an effort to educate and inform Catholics and others on global issues and to provide opportunities for active engagement on legislative and policy matters. He previously worked as a CRS intern in Zimbabwe and as an intern at the United Nations. Father Molina has held a variety of positions throughout the United States where he was integral in building community and social awareness, and was also the recipient of the Matteo Ricci Award for Academic Excellence, IPED, Fordham University, in 2001. He recently published the book *The Impact of Remittances in Developing Countries: Saving, Investment, and School Enrollment*.

Wellington Webb will speak at Regis University

Student Center Dining Room, 8 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 3 (\$20)

Former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, currently president and CEO of the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, has had a long career in public service, including in the Colorado House of Representatives. He has served as regional director of the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare since President Jimmy Carter selected him in 1977. As mayor, Webb focused on the four issues he believed supported a successful U.S. city: parks and open space, public safety, economic development and children. Webb's talk, "Bridging the Gaps," will kick off Black History Month at Regis University.



Wellington Webb

Five Two Eight O Finale on Thursday, Feb. 5 (Invitation)

Project Five Two Eight O brought neighbors to various theaters this summer to tell stories about their lives. Artists, dancers and theater professionals translated the stories into creative work. The Five Two Eight O finale event will take place on Thursday, Feb. 5, at the Crossroads Theater. The event will revisit the themes of the many stories told, and bring back the art that was created. Five Two Eight O, a project of Regis College professor Janna Goodwin, was funded by the Case Foundation and administered by the ICG. Read more about the project by visiting www.fivetwoeighto.org.

Imam Yahya Abdullah will speak at Regis University

St. John Francis Regis Chapel, 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 12 (Free)

Imam Yahya Abdullah is Imam of The Islamic Association of Desoto, Texas, founded in 2002. He was imam of the Dallas Masjid for 18 years and established a full-time Sister Clara Mohammed School in 1983. In 1988, Imam Abdullah co-produced a nationally aired documentary, founded African-American Men Against Narcotics, and was also featured in a nationally acclaimed documentary on PBS. Imam Abdullah is the author of four books; *Elements of Progressive Leadership*, *Dynamics of African-American Male Development – Manhood Training Curriculum Outline*, *Religion is the Solution to the Crime Problem in America* and *Developing the Human Potential*. Imam Abdullah performed Hajj to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in October 1981.

Nora Burns will speak at Berkeley Community Church

one block west of Regis University, 7 p.m. Thursday, March 19 (\$20)

Nora Burns is an expert trainer in the field of intergenerational conflict and communication, a senior professional in human resources and the founder and president of Insightful Endeavors International. She will address the fact that for the first time in American history there are four very different generations in the workforce. It used to be the norm that older workers were the bosses. Now a 25-year-old could be reporting to a 50-year-old, or it could be the other way around. With humor and practical insight, Burns will share tips and techniques for moving from a "them" mentality to an "us" attitude and building sustainable and innovative teams. Berkeley Church is located at 3701 West 50th Ave. (one block west of Regis at West 50th Avenue and Meade Street)

Dorothy Maver will speak at Berkeley Community Church

one block west of Regis University, 7 p.m. Thursday, April 16 (\$20)

Dr. Dorothy Maver is the former executive director of Peace Partnership International, whose mission is forging partnerships with and among government, civil society and business to catalyze the transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace throughout the world. Maver serves on the steering committee of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Department of Peace; is the founder of the Vermont Peace Institute; and served as co-coordinator of Share the Spirit of Peace Global Summits. She is also co-author of the book *Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom*.

For more information regarding any of the upcoming events or for a list of other future events, visit our website at www.icgregis.org or contact Fredricka Brown at (303) 458-4967.

Need Help?

If you believe you may be in need of the collaborative dialogue resources of the Institute please do not hesitate to give Fredricka Brown a call at (303) 458-4967, e-mail us at icg@regis.edu, or visit our website at www.icgregis.org.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE INSTITUTE ON THE COMMON GOOD

The Institute on the Common Good at Regis University serves the community at-large by promoting the common good and providing a safe and effective space for community dialogue, communal discernment, and public deliberation.



Institute on the
Common Good

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