



Muslim News

22 June 2012 , 2 Shauban 1433

Muslim sisters converge in Palmerston North

Muslim women and girls, under the aegis of Islamic Women Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ) converged in Palmerston North from 11th to 13th May for this year's convention and conference.

About 150 sisters from across New Zealand attended the conference that featured lectures and speech presentations.

In her testimony of the conference Asayal Abbad Almutairi from Timaru disclosed that 'Everyone was so welcoming and friendly---everyone shared their opinions and ideas and they were all welcomed.' The experience, according to Assayal made her to be looking forward to next year's event.

And for Sara Alquran the conference 'was an amazing opportunity to make great friends and I've been keeping contact with everyone of my new friends.

For Khatra Omar of Hamilton, 'the conference was an educational weekend. Speaking to, and learning from wiser

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NISAMAC Christchurch Youth First workshop

By Maryam Mann

NISAMAC Christchurch Youth First workshop 6 May 2012

When we, the youth of NisaMac were so generously given the task of conducting a Muslim youth workshop, we felt a sense of pride and honour, Masha'allah. Interest was sparked by several young girls in the community particularly those who are regular attendees of Teacher Maysoon's Saturday classes who gave wonderful speeches on the topic, 'A Muslimah's Character.'

Although, we had never done anything like this on our own, we felt a sense of responsibility to make sure that we step up to the mark of excellent adult role models around us.

We held several meetings, delegated tasks and discussed and practised speech topics. Our aim was to attract as many youth and mothers in the community to attend and benefit and Alhamdulillah, we had a good number nearing around sixty. Speeches were well thought out, moving and compelling. The audience was well receiving and appreciative of the effort we had put in our first ever Islamic workshop and it was very encouraging indeed.

Insha'allah, we hope that this is the beginning of many wonderful events initiated and conducted by the Muslim youth.

The determination of a few reaped many rewards Masha'allah and brought together Islamic Sisterhood, trust and friendships that will flourish over time.

Since the workshop, many young girls of the Muslim community have been given a boost and inspiration to get



involved.

Jazak Allahu khair to all the wonderful young girls who made this event a huge success. They have sacrificed their time and put in lots of energy, Masha'allah. Jazak Allahu khair NisaMac for having the trust and belief in us and for giving us the privilege of conducting such a wonderful and fruitful event.

Muslim: A title to maintain

By Farid Ahmed

Do I know the Meaning of Muslim? If I am a Homeopath, I know what it means. But if I am a Muslim, do I know what Muslim means? If I know the meaning then congratulation to me but if I don't know the meaning then I must learn it. It is never late to understand my or your identity. Many of us take "Muslim" for granted and we never challenge ourselves constantly on what exactly "Muslim" means and what honor it carries. As a result often we do not honor the title and we bring bad name to ourselves as well as bad name for the title giver, Islam and entire Muslims.

What is the meaning of Muslim? Muslim means whoever gives up own choices and takes Allah's choices in his/her life. The opposite of Muslim is whoever prefers his/her choices over Allah's. You may have heard the term some people say "It is my life, my choice and I will do what ever I want." This line is exactly opposite to a line that Muslim takes. A Muslim surrenders his/her life, desires, and choices to the will of Allah only. Muslim means the person who:

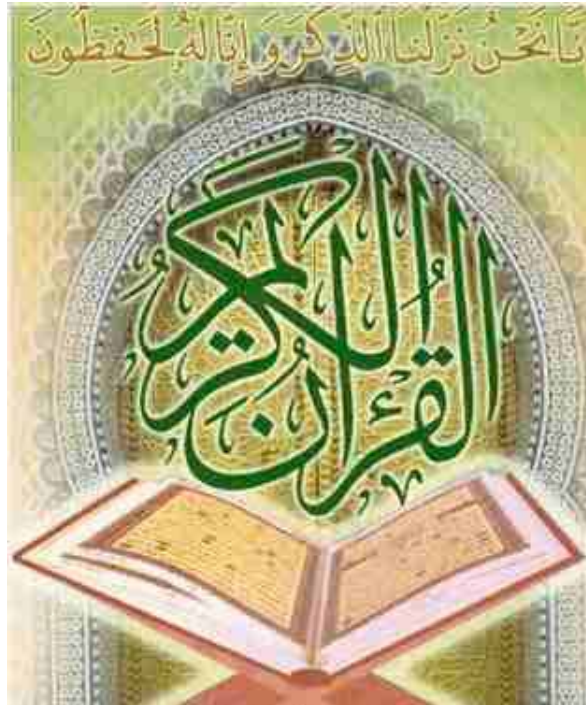
- Thinks the real owner of his/her life is Allah
- Thinks Allah created him/her for a purpose
- Believes he/she is not free from consequences of their actions

- Therefore submits totally to the will of creator to fulfill the purpose of life
- Therefore gives up own desires and choices to achieve higher purpose of life
- By doing so become qualified for Allah's Mercy and Paradise.

Now the question is, how would I know whether I am a Muslim? Or how many percent Muslim am I? The answer is easy. I have to find out about my loyalty to Allah versus my own choice and desires. Have I given up my choices to follow Allah's choice? If I have done so then I am a Muslim, otherwise not. Then how many percent of my choices have I given up for Allah's choices? That will determine

how many percent Muslim I am. It is very simple calculation and any one can do it.

Muslim is a title: Muslim is not a name of anyone or any race. It is a very honorable title. This title doesn't come automatically. If your father is a "Khan or Chowdhury" you automatically become



“So, if you have chosen to take the titles ‘Muslim’ then you have every reason to feel special, humble and thankful to Allah for it. No matter what some people say or think about you out of ignorance or contempt, you should never feel discouraged by it.

Khan or Chowdhury but if your father is a Non Muslim you can become a Muslim. This title has to be earned by every individual.

How can it be earned? Well, like every other title one has to work hard to earn it. If you want to earn the title "Sir", "Dame", "Doctor" and so on, you need to achieve or acquire some special

knowledge and qualities. Similarly the title Muslim needs knowledge and action. Then it will be given to the person.

Who gives the title "Muslim"? The title "Muslim" does not come from any university or from any emperor in this world. It comes from the office of

Almighty God, the Creator of mankind, His Majesty Allah. He has chosen this title. That's why it is unique, meaningful and very popular. The title "Muslim" is known everywhere on the earth and in the heaven because it has come from the Lord of the earth and heaven.

It is a beautiful title and the giver of this title has made it very easy for anyone to receive it. He did not keep it only for few chosen people but He made it available for each human to take if he/she wants to. This title is not limited to any culture or nationality. It is universal. That's why people from every corner of the earth are taking this title happily. Holy Quran describes the exact word of Allah about this title: 22.78

It is He who has named you Muslims both before and in this revelation

Why should one feel happy with this title? People feel special when they receive any honorary title. Some people feel proud with it but pride is not a good thing. Feeling special and humble is good indeed. When an emperor offers a title it comes as recognition of certain special quality and it shows the honor and appreciation from the authority. Now, when Allah gives a title "Muslim" it comes with more specialty like:

- The title "Muslim" comes from the highest authority of all
- This title is not just a title in any culture but it

represents the main purpose of human life. It is spot on.

- This title is best title because it doesn't create class, superiority or inferiority complex. It makes one humble and loyal servant of Allah and kind towards Allah's creations

- The title "Muslim" is a constant reminder that the title holder belongs to

Lincoln High Students visit An-Nur Mosque

Over sixty students of Lincoln High School visited An-Nur mosque in Christchurch 'to learn more about Islam'.

Imam of the mosque Sheikh Monir El-Farrah and brother Jamal Green, a member of the Shura council, received the curious students and their teachers.

In his power point presentation to the visiting students Sheikh Monir explained the five pillars of Islam, what Islam is and who a Muslim is.

The students asked questions that were answered by the Imam who also showed them around the Mosque facility.

After having drinks and biscuits served by the mosque the students were given free literature on Islam to take home and enrich their understanding of the religion of Islam.



Open Day at An-Nur mosque

A banner that reads 'Open Day on Saturday 12th May, 10am-12 noon, All Welcome', greeted motorists and passers-by on Deans Avenue, Christchurch.

On the day itself the main gate of the mosque at No 104 Deans Avenue Christchurch, were left open from early morning.

Visitors started arriving even before 10.00am. Among the early arrivals were Ms. Megan Woods, Member of Parliament for Wigram. She, like the Imam Sheikh Monir El-Farra and the Social Secretary of Muslim Association of Canterbury Dr Hussein Hafiz received other visitors. In his presentation to the visitors Sheikh Monir explained the central teachings of Islam as well as gave details about the rituals of fasting in Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Sheikh Monir also took time to delve into some details on subjects such as 'women in Islam' and 'obligations of Muslims towards non-Muslims and the wider community.



After answering questions visitors expressed gratitude on the openness and hospitality of the mosque. One of them remarked that 'I am better informed about Islam now than before'.

The Social Secretary Dr Hussein Hafiz served refreshments of drinks, dates and



Indian hospitals eye 'Halal' certification to attract patients from Muslim countries

CHENNAI (India), 19 May (IINA) – There are two things that worry almost every patient from Islamic countries who come to Indian hospitals: the meat they eat and the direction of Mecca. With more than 75% of the medical tourists being from the Middle East, hospitals are eyeing 'Halal' certification to make them feel at home, Indian media reported recently.

Chennai-based Global Health City said it has become the first in the country to receive the 'halal' certification from the Halal Development Authority. The certification would mean they get 'halal' meat in food and have 'quiblah' (the direction of Mecca) signs in every room and prayer hall. Muslims offer prayers facing 'quiblah.'

At least five leading hospital groups in the country including Apollo Hospitals and Fortis are in talks with the authority, said Halal India general manager Mohamed Noman Lateef. In Chennai, Mehta Hospitals and Lifeline Hospitals have also sent applications for the certification.

Halal India, is an independent Halal Certification body which is recognised by the Indian government and deals with certification of food, cosmetics and drugs as per the Sharia law. Halal is anything that is legal or lawful for Muslims. In terms of meat, halal applies to the kind of meat (pork is banned), their health condition and the way they are killed. The butcher must make a recitation to God and cut the jugular vein, carotid artery and the windpipe with a sharp knife. The animal can't be stunned before it is killed.

To ensure the meat used in the Global hospital's kitchen is 'halal,' officials from Halal India visited the slaughter house from where the meat is purchased. "It's not just about food or prayer hall, it's about lifestyle. For any Muslim it is important that any business performed in their daily lives is clean, hygienic and not



detrimental to either their health or wellbeing as specified in the religious text. In that sense, it is a new benchmark for quality," said Halal India business development manager Sheetal Bajaj.

Hospital chairman Dr K Ravindranath said Halal certification was a form of approval that boosts patients' confidence. "To earn the certification, Global Health City had to meet strict Islamic guidelines dealing with hygiene and

dietary regulations of global standards." The hospital's international business vice-president M Zakariah Ahmed said after Joint Commission International (JCI) this would be one of the biggest certification process hospitals in the country are aiming for.

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Every room will also have a sticker that gives the exact direction of Mecca. "I tell every patient the food is halal. But I feel they would be happy to see the certification," said Global Hospital's international patients executive Vireesh Singh. "We tell them that we make public announcements for prayer and ensure that we give women a separate place during prayer," he said.

Transplant surgeon Dr Madhu Shankar agrees. "People from the Middle East have a different culture. We don't enter the female patient's room without their permission. A female nurse will walk in first and seek permission for a male doctor's entry," he said.

MCA organises Regional Quran Competition

Muslim Council of Auckland (MCA) organised a regional Quran competition for Madrasah students of Auckland on 29 April 2012. The event was organised and hosted by Al Farooq Madrasah on behalf of MCA. FIANZ contributed \$5,000.00 towards the project and the shortfall was covered through donations. Al Farooq Youth managed the catering side with a lot of pride and enthusiasm.

The event was officially opened by Dr Anwar-ul Ghani the President of FIANZ. In his keynote address, Dr Ghani commended MCA and Al Farooq Madrasah for organising the event and thanked the participating Madrasahs and teachers for preparing their students. He said,

competition to determine winners. Members of the public were also invited to witness the Oratory finals. Audience quiz was a feature of the finals and instant prizes were awarded to brothers and sisters who correctly answered questions thrown to the floor.



“FIANZ is always supportive of such events” and would do whatever it can to promote such activities. Around eighty (80) students from 13 different madrasahs of Auckland took part in the competition. The event was organised in four sections, namely, Quran Hifz, Quran Nazirah, Oratory and Quiz and contested in 3 age groups as follows:

- Under 12 years of age
- Over 12 to 15 years
- Over 15 to 18 years.

An independent committee comprising of brothers Umarji Mohammed, Azim Khan and Mohammed Afiz was appointed to look into any disputes in case there was one. Three judges were appointed for each section and marks were consolidated at the end of the

with trophies and prizes. All the participants were also awarded with consolation prizes. The event was a great success with parents teachers and students thoroughly enjoying the competition. Maulana Bashir Ahmed Diwan officiated the closing ceremony. In his address, he stressed on the importance of teaching Quran and Islamic education to our children. He thanked all those who were involved in this worthy course.

MCA would like to encourage other district to



Questions were based on Islam.

Top three winners in section and age category were awarded

event should be a grand occasion and should culminate with a family fun day where parents, children and other Muslims can enjoy and be part of the competition and celebrations.-- *By Mohammed Azeem*

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organise regional competitions so that the winners can be invited to compete in the final organised annually under the auspicious of FIANZ. The National winners can then represent New Zealand in any International competitions. MCA believes the final

MCA QURAN COMPETITION





Royal Charter for Oxford Islamic centre

OXFORD, 25 Jumada Al-Thani/16 May (IINA) – A centre for the scholarly study of Islam has become the first Islamic organisation to receive a Royal Charter.

The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies was granted the honour 27 years after it was set up, with the Prince of Wales hosting a reception to celebrate the historic achievement.

Charles, who is patron of the centre, hailed its work to improve understanding of Islamic culture.

He said it was “absolutely right” that we should do all we can to nurture an institution which not only promotes a better informed understanding of Islamic culture and civilisation but also reminds both the Islamic world and the West of “those timeless, universal principles of harmony enshrined within Islam”.

But he admitted that “many of the potential problems” he warned of in his speech to the centre in 1993, entitled Islam and the West, had come to pass.

In that speech he cautioned against sliding “into a new era of



danger and division because governments and peoples, communities and religions, cannot live together in peace in a shrinking world.”

He was joined by 150 guests at the reception at St James’s Palace in London, including a number of foreign dignitaries and British politicians.

Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls, Universities and Science Minister David Willetts, Attorney General Dominic Grieve and Minister of State Oliver Letwin mingled with the prime minister of Malaysia, Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak, and others.

Dr Farhan Nizami, director of the centre, said: “This is a most important and welcome moment and I would like, on this occasion, to thank warmly all those who have encouraged and assisted the centre’s development over more than 25 years.”

The Royal Charter, illuminated on vellum, was on display during the evening. Such charters are granted by the Queen on the advice of the Privy Council. The practice dates back to the 13th century, with Charles’s alma mater, Cambridge University, the first to receive one in 1231 – as the Prince was quick to point out.

US Muslims Burial Dilemma

ST. LOUIS (Missouri, USA) 19 May (IINA)- Facing years of a dilemma to bury their dead according to Islamic teachings, a growing American Muslim minority is trying to find low-cost burial services, funding what would be Missouri’s first Muslim funeral home.

“The community is growing, and things are going well for Muslims in St. Louis now,” Adil Imdad, an environmental and geotechnical engineer in St. Louis, told St. Louis Today website on Friday, May 18.

Like thousands of US Muslims, Imdad faced burial dilemma when his 28-year-old cousin died of cancer in Ohio two years ago.

The family’s grief was compounded by the absence of Muslim ritual following her death, with no imam available to handle the religious customs, no funeral director and no Muslim cemetery where the family could lay her to rest.

At this moment, Imdad decided to take night classes at St. Louis Community College, graduating last spring with a certificate of specialization in funeral directing.

Waiting for his state license, he started raising funds at Daar-ul-Islam mosque for what he says will be Missouri’s first Muslim funeral home to cut funeral costs which reach \$5,000 or \$7,000.

Mufti Asif Umar, the imam at Daar-ul-Islam, said keeping costs down for families was also at the heart of his support for Imdad’s Muslim funeral home idea.

In August, the Bosnian Islamic Center in Lemay bought a large plot of land in the old Odd Fellows Cemetery on Broadway, making it the first Muslim cemetery in St. Louis, said Imam Enver Kunic.

Burial fees in other cemeteries “were too high,” Imam Enver Kunic said.

Though there are no official statistics, the US is believed to be home to 7-8 million Muslim.

For US Muslims, Islamic cemeteries offered them a better opportunity to practice the correct religious rituals surrounding burial of the dead.

In Muslim countries, death and burial are “treated as a purely religious affair,” Mohammed Hussein, a radiation

oncologist from Washington, said.

In the US, when someone invests in mortuary school and various other funeral-related degrees, certificates and licenses, “naturally, they want to make a living of it.”

A Muslim’s dead body should be immediately taken to a mortuary for washing and preparation.

Two or three adult Muslims should wash the body and then put on the shroud (kafan). Before the burial, the funeral prayer should be done.

The burial should be done as soon as possible. It is makruh (reprehensible) to delay the burial of the dead.

After months of studying such Muslim funeral texts as “Funerals: Regulations & Exhortations” and “A Brief Summary About the People’s Violations in Funerals,” Imdad said he is ready to help ease people’s burdens during a trying time in their lives.

With a deal he has arranged with the new Bosnian cemetery, Imdad hopes to cut the total cost of preparation, funeral and burial down to less than \$2,000.

Recreation in Islam

Prepared by Dr. Maysoon Salama

All praise is due to Allah Who has made clear that which is lawful and that which is unlawful. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon prophet Mohammad, his household, his companions, and all those who follow their path.

During holiday seasons, many parents and teachers are concerned about two important issues: recreation and what forms of it are beneficial and acceptable; and spare time and what to do with it.

When you read the story of Hanthalah Al-Usaydee, may Allah be pleased with him, you will note the admirable method that Islam promotes. Hanthalah, may Allah be pleased with him, belonged to a generation that preferred to spend all its life in the highest possible state of Islamic faith. They assumed that playing with one's wife and having fun with one's children negates the concept of worship and total submission to Allah.

Hanthalah, may Allaah be pleased with him, said "(One day) Abu Bakr told me, 'How are you, Hanthalah?'" and I said, "Hanthalah is a hypocrite!" Abu Bakr then exclaimed, "May Allah be glorified, what are you saying?" I replied, "We stay with the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam and he reminds us of Paradise and Hell and it is as if we are looking at them and when we leave him, we attend to our wives, children and livelihood; hence, we forget much (of what we have learnt)." Abu Bakr, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, "By Allah! We also feel the same." Then I, along with Abu Bakr, went to the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam and I told him, "Hanthalah is a hypocrite!" The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, "What is that?" I replied, "We stay with you, and you remind us of Paradise and Hell as if we were looking at them, then when we leave you, we attend to our wives, children and livelihood, hence we have forgotten much." The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam then said, "By He in Whose Hand is my soul, if you had remained upon the same state you were on when you were with me, in the remembrance of Allah, the angels would have shook your hands while you were on your beds or (walking) along your way. But, O Hanthalah, An hour and an hour! (i.e. everything has its proper time)" (Muslim) .

Spending time alternatively between work and recreation removes tiredness and boredom, renews energy and increases one's productivity. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam's statement quoted should not be taken to mean that a Muslim may spend all his time in amusement.

'Umar bin Abdul-'Azeez, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "There is no harm for a Muslim to have some amusement and partake in some recreational activities so long as he does not make that his habit and lag behind during the time of seriousness, and play during the time of work.

However, people of weak understanding use this text to straiten the hours of remembrance of Allah and seriousness and broaden the period of amusement thereby making places of knowledge and admonition deserted but for a little while.

Further, some people wrongly assume that recreation and amusement is an unrestrained matter in which one is free to overstep the limits of Sharee'ah and partake in it through whatever means without having regard for Halaal or Haraam. Here we have to know how our righteous predecessors amused themselves.

Ibn Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, while explaining the importance of recreation said, 'Refresh your hearts; for when the heart is coerced (to do something) it becomes blind'.

'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also said, 'Make your heart relaxed and seek for it (entertainment in) light insightful conversation, for it gets bored as your bodies get bored'.

Aboo Dardaa', may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'I make my heart relaxed through lawful amusement; that it may be strong enough to assist me on the Truth'.

Since we have concluded that recreational activities were part of the life of the first generation of Muslims, we have to know how they used to amuse themselves. Was their recreation a result of having nothing to do with their time, or to fight boredom? No, not at all! Their recreation was rather to train their souls and to get more energy and higher aims to achieve the goal for which mankind was created which is to worship Allah.

To them, amusement was a definite

means to an end, and not an end in its own right in which to spend all of one's money and time. It is unfortunate that nowadays participation in recreational activities has become a way to waste away one's character and show disregard for the Law of Allah. This is a result of the present-day misconception of recreation, for the people nowadays regard recreation as the goal in itself and not as a means to achieve a higher goal.

As for the first generation of Muslims, they partook in amusements in order to strengthen their bodies, refine their manners, and train themselves in the qualities of real manhood and seriousness and to open new horizons of knowledge and action. It was for these noble purposes that they raced, wrestled and encouraged one another to learn spear throwing. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam raced with 'Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, and wrestled with Rukaanah and defeated him and that was what caused Rukaanah to embrace Islam.

The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam saw some of the tribe of Aslam taking part in a combative competition in the market-place and told them, "Throw it (i.e. their spears), O children of Isma'eel, for your father was a (spear-)thrower." (Bukhaari).

Umar bin Abdul-Azeez, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "Discuss the Book of Allah and gather together (for the purpose of learning and discussing) it and when you get bored, then telling stories of (the deeds) of men is agreeable."

The amusement done by the first generation was not a vain one. It was full of benefits. It did not contain making jest of others, backbiting, lying or blackmailing.

The Salaf confirmed that the human soul does have its ups and downs, but they did not allow it to exceed the limits of Allah during the time of Salaah, for that is a transgression over the rights of Allah; nor did they partake of amusement during the hours of work, for that is transgression over people's rights.

There is more to the life of a Muslim than just recreation. It is only allowed so that Muslims may not be negligent in their duties and obligations. That was why the companions used to amuse themselves. However whenever real issues came up they became real men. Salamah Ibn

Mohamed Mohamed gets FIFA's endorsement as players' agent

Auckland based chartered accountant, Mohamed Mohamed, has been granted players' agent license by NZ Football.

Mohamed, whose involvement with New Zealand football took him to the executive board of Auckland City FC few years ago, was granted the license after passing an examination set by the football world governing body, FIFA, in March this year.

Mohamed's recognition by FIFA makes him only the third players' agent licensed by New Zealand football and includes Kevin Clarke and Luiz Uehara of Christchurch and Dunedin respectively.

Commenting about his feeling about the game in New Zealand, Mohamed says he has an undying passion for football that is developing very fast in New Zealand. He believes he is now even better positioned to play a bigger role in the development of the game and players in this country.

Mohamed adds that there is opportunity for New Zealand football to develop further and be among the best in the world and he believes his international contacts and experience position him to play a positive role in this development.



Muslim sisters converge in Palmerston North (From Page 1)

women was very helpful'. Khatra added that the highlight of the conference for her was the lecture on identity. For 'it taught me how to find myself within Allah and to be proud to be a Muslim. I also enjoyed meeting youth from all around New Zealand. I got to connect with them in addition to talking about issues that we experience in our daily lives.'

Speakers at this year's conference include sisters Anjum Rahman, Aliyah Dazeinsen, Maysoon Salama, Zakiia Thompson, Waseema Ahmed and Noeleen van de Lisdonk.

New leaders emerge for IWCNZ

At its two day convention in Palmerston North from 11-13th May 2012, the International Women Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ) elected new officers to steer the affairs of the Muslim women organization. The new leaders are:

National Co-ordinator: Anjum Rahman
Assitant National Co: ordinators: Naz Khan, Noeleen van der Lisdonk
Secretary: Maysoon Salama
Treasurer: Munira Khan



Recreation in Islam

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Abdur-Rahmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "The companions of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam were neither corrupt nor lazy, yet they used to recite some poetry in their meeting places and recollect some of the issues of their Jahiliyyah period; but when any one of them was offended on the matters of religion, he became enraged."

The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam also used to make jokes. An old woman came to him and said, "Pray for me, O Messenger of Allah, that Allah may admit me to Paradise." The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam then told her, "O mother of so-and-so, old women will not enter Paradise." The woman became distraught and wept, thinking that she would not enter Paradise. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam then told her what he meant: "an old woman would not enter Paradise as she was in this world, but that she would be raised up by Allah on the Day of Judgement as another creature and He would make her enter Paradise in the form of a maiden". He then recited the word of Allah: "Verily, We have created them (maidens) of special creation. And made them virgins, Loving (their husbands only and) of equal age." (Al-Waaqi'ah: 35-37).

In another example of the innocent and lawful joking of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam is when he asked a woman, "Who is your husband?" and she answered, "So-and-so." He then said, "The one in whose eyes is a whiteness?" The woman hurriedly went to her husband and started examining his eyes. Being astonished, her husband asked her, "What is the matter with you?" She told him what the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam had said. He then said, "Don't you see that the whiteness of my eyes is more than the darkness?"

This personality that made jokes is the same that prayed in the night, fasted in the day, fought in the way of Allah and spent generously for His sake. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam – while advising his nation to maintain balance in matters of seriousness and amusement said, "Indeed, your Lord has a right upon you, your soul has a right upon you and your family has a right upon you; so give everyone his due right." (Bukhaari).

During holidays, there is a problem that causes sleeplessness for both parents and

teachers alike: the large amount of spare time that youths have in which they have nothing serious to do. In fact, youths' corruption and perverseness is a direct consequence of this problem, while the present material civilisation widens the scope of this danger,

The more dangerous part of this problem is that this spare time must either be spent in something good or something bad. For whoever does not use his spare time in good deeds will spend it in evil acts. Yes, when one does not make proper use of his time it becomes a problem to him and it is well-known that having nothing to do makes one susceptible to corruption and leads to lustful desires that incapacitate the intellect and opens doors of devilish insinuations and other evils.

Specialists testify to the fact that crime and other social ills reach their highest point with unemployment and vacant hours and that the problem increases with the modern mass-media that entices youths and opens for them innumerable ways to waste their time. Therefore, in order not to turn spare time into a demon, spending one's time in useful things and moving from one work to another is prevention against the disadvantages of spare time.

Among the useful means through which one can spend his free time is performing acts of worship and reading useful religious and moral books. That is why it was said, 'There is nothing that has more impact on the mind, is more gladdening to the heart and makes one more eloquent ... than a book which has many benefits in it and costs less...' Abdullah bin Mubarak, may Allaah have mercy upon him, used to stay in his house, after he had sought knowledge and finished from his trade, reading the books of the Salaf and if he was asked, 'Don't you feel lonely?' He would answer, 'How can I feel lonely while I am with the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam and his companions'.

Indeed, the people who spend their spare time in reading and learning books of useful knowledge rise in progress and civilisation and will be capable of understanding life, themselves and achieving their goals. As for those whose culture does not go beyond arenas of recreation, amusement and fashion they will ever remain subordinates and disgraced.

Among the useful things that one can do

during the holiday is to attend lectures, symposia and scholarly lessons, to be kind to the kith and kin, partake in summer activities and amuse oneself following the aforementioned rules. 'Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, 'These hands of yours must be employed to obey Allah before they employ you to disobey Him'.

Putting Islam into our youth and Children holiday Fun is a challenge. Youth and Children view holidays as a time of carefree play, little responsibility, and little structure. But is this the best course for parents and the Muslim community to treat their children's school vacation?

Children who attend school during the academic year are used to a minimum of 8 hours a day; 5 days a week structured environment. Therefore, the holidays can be boring for a child if left in a totally unstructured environment. In addition, with a little creativity there are endless opportunities for incorporating fun learning activities that utilize Islamic concepts into a child's school holiday. These activities can range from Islamic day –camps and trips to organized activities with other Muslim children within the same community. Not only does this provide an Islamic environment for children to have fun and socialize with other Muslim children; it can also help provide children with the necessary knowledge to guide them to the straight path. The merits of obtaining Islamic knowledge in the Qur'an and Sunnah are numerous. The Qur'an states, "...Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge..." [58:11].

Muslim community and associations efforts should be directed towards designing a variety of Islamic oriented recreational activities that attract the youth in particular, extend knowledge about Islam and build a lasting bond among the Muslims leading to a stronger community for the future Insha'Allah.

The Islamic Girl Youth Camp Of Muslim Association of Canterbury

“Exciting, enjoyable, energy-consuming, entertaining, exceptional and I could go on forever. There are millions of words I could use to describe this year’s camp and not a single one would include negative connotations. Because it was filled with fantastic activities and plenty of competition such as the abseiling, the rock climbing, the sandwich making and my personal favourite, the treasure hunt; there wasn’t even a split second of boredom across the 3 days we spent at Blue Skies. It is rather obvious, if you break it down, that the root of the success of the camp was the people who came and I am so thankful that I had the chance to meet and work with such a wonderful group of people.....”

These were the first words of one of our youth leaders who attended the December 2011 NISAMAC camp describing her feelings when she was asked for a feed back about the camp.

The Muslimah camp in Christchurch has been designed to provide an Islamic atmosphere for Muslim youth and girls from age 10 years and up where they can learn more about Islam and each other in a truly Islamic environment and most important of all, having fun doing it. The objective was to build a lasting bond among the Muslim Youth with the hope of making new friendships and building a stronger community for the future Insha’Allah.

A combination of group activities, group discussions, Islamic lectures and sports were planned in an attempt to provide a positive and energetic approach in helping our youth and young girl to live and build an Islamic identity.

Our main goals:

1. To please Allah subhanahu wa Taa’la.
2. To increase our Iman and taste the sweetness of Salah, Qura’n & unity.
3. To learn different aspects of Islam and widen our Islamic knowledge.
4. To spend quality time together and experience the joy of living a pure Islamic environment.
5. To experience the diversity of the ummah and strengthen our
6. sisterhood relations.

Committee members:

Maysoon Salama, Haneen Alayan, Sarah Ghanem, Vanessa Chellem, Sara Quran,

Adina Hussaini, Huda Mahmoud, Qali Mohammed, Barlin Abdi and Juliana binte Osman, Zeinah Oumer, Aida Quran, Muna Khalifa and Noha El Madani.

INTRODUCTION

The committee and many others too put a lot of time and effort into the camp and may Allah accept this from us all. Al hamdulillah we enjoyed our 3 days with our Muslimah youth and girls. They were without exception beautiful, polite, young women of Eeman and with the freshness of youth.

FUNDING

Our sincere appreciation to the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) and the Islamic Women’s Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ) for funding the camp. Due to their generosity we were able to organise additional activities such as abseiling and first aid training.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Having experienced the benefits and the joy of NISAMAC camp last year as well as going through a lot of tough times after the Christchurch earthquakes, the ladies and youth were keen to organise another camp this year.

The programme committee consulted the youth & teenagers for input into the youth programme. This time three of our young youth leaders came forward and took several responsibilities for the organization of the camp and their performance is to be commended.

It was difficult to book a camp venue especially after the earthquake even though we started calling places 4 months before the camp. However Blue skies camp site (which was used for our Muslimah camp January 2011) was available for only the 3 days booked (20-22/12/2011). The facilities were reasonably tidy including a large kitchen, meeting room, a swimming pool, confidence course climbing wall and Abseiling tower. An unfortunate oversight was that the booking was made during Summer holiday when many people especially university students are out of town also the days booked did not coincide with the week end so few of our working ladies were not able to take leave although they were keen to join the camp. Despite that, the turn up was very pleasing.

THE CAMP

Al hamdulillah we believe we achieved our goals of fun and social interaction for our youth and girls in an Islamic environment. There was a really pleasing mix of ages and ethnic groups and great turn out overall. The girls and youth mixed with old friends and also forged new friendships. There was a warm atmosphere amongst everyone at the camp and many expressed regret at the finish of the camp. The committee members have all had a lot of positive verbal feedback and many girls are eagerly awaiting a next camp!

PROGRAMME

The programme included a range of activities to try to cater for everyone.

The First aid workshop was a success and a useful event. Sister Juliana was sincere, experienced, enthusiastic and capable speaker who managed to keep the 4 sessions interesting and interactive. Also she managed to keep a balance between the slide show and hands on experience. She also challenged the ladies and youth with different scenarios as well questions and small reward gifts to keep their interest.

Abseiling,” the high light of this camp”, was a fantastic activity which thrilled the girls as it was the first experience for most of them. We were lucky to have 5 lady instructors volunteer their time. It has been always difficult to find female instructors for this challenging, scary, freaky yet awesome, rewarding, exciting, and excellent activity for increasing self confidence. Our younger girls were noticeably impressive and daring. For the second time, the abseiling instructors were astounded by how polite, well behaved and lovely all of our girls are. We felt proud of them.

Swimming was another general favorite and easy to organize. The weather was fantastic and allowed both the girls and the organizers to have relaxing time in the pool in full privacy. The youth (Adina Hussein) organized team competitions in the pool that were well received by the girls. The girls also enjoyed the sports organized by the youth (Haneen Alayan, Sara Qura’n and Adina Hussein). Soccer and base ball were popular.

The team competitions were very successful. The Islamic scavenger hunt/ Amazing race for clues around the

confidence course was a hit especially with the few modifications from last year and was enjoyed thoroughly by all teams for a good two hrs. All team members were challenged physically and mentally by being asked to fulfill a demanding obstacle challenge and memorizing some verses of Qura'n or Hadeeth on the spot & solving Islamic puzzles. Islamic questions and answers organized by Maysoon Salama was received well by the teams as well as the healthy sandwich making competitions which were supervised by Vanessa Chellem. The judges enjoyed tasting some creative and nicely presented sandwiches.

Islamic lectures focused on the theme "healthy mind healthy body". Most of the lectures were presented by Dr. Maysoon Salama. However, Haneen Alayan, Sarah Qura'n and Sondos Qura'n gave very nice presentations with great confidence masha' Allah. They have every reason to be proud. The prayer in Jama'ah went very well on the first day and followed through to the last day so well. A special powerful tathkira was given after each prayer and was received very well by the girls. The girls were attentive and we hope they all left the camp with some new outlook or knowledge to implement. We are certainly heartened by the number who indicated that they learnt a lot more about their religion especially in relation to the theme. Sad though that for many these injections come only once a year. The girls were encouraged to join the ladies weekly Islamic Education Halaqa at Masjid An Nur.

Crafts, Henna, Hijab design were well received by all participant alhamdo lillah. The dress up for wedding show was an activity that the girls enjoyed and each team gave a short presentation about beautification in islam.

The ladies who joined during the day to help in cooking ended up staying much longer than they planned indicating their interest in the programme. Unlike last year, this year we had more younger children attending with their mothers who were committee members and cooks. However, a minimum distraction was experienced during the educational sessions and it was a joy having them around and the youth done a wonderful job including them in the various activities.

THE FOOD

Ma sha allah the cooks all did a fantastic job. They rose to the task of preparing every meal and snack and have been very conscious about wasting learning from

the experience of previous camps. All meals were delicious and fully consumed due to right estimation of quantities to cook. The girls were very supportive in setting up for meals and cleaning up after meals. The Camp Coordinators were delighted with the attitude of the girls and youth and their involvement in the duties. The senior girls did a fantastic job in the kitchen cleaning up after each meal. There was a lot o cooperation and wonderful to see the same girls helping again after the next meal when it was not their turn.

THE CLEAN UP

The girls teams were rostered for the regular clean ups after meals and they all were very cooperative. Some teams did better than others and showed more initiative and team spirit and they were rewarded by being given extra points towards the competition. At the end of the camp each group vacuumed its own room and the other cleaning duties in the kitchen and hall were shared by the youth. On the whole, whenever there was a job, there were eager volunteers to do it. This eased the load on the camp coordinators and the cooks and generally contributed to a great atmosphere. The final clean-up proved to be a very big job as usual but almost everyone gave a helping hand. Last year a small tired group was left to do the final touches following the clean up instructions exactly as stipulated in the conditions of hire. This year the final clean up was finished one hour earlier than the target time due to the cooperation of all campers. This left us with a relaxing one last hour at the camp where all got time to enjoy a popsicle and have a short assembly planned by committee members to present a surprise gift and flowers to the Camp Amira. That was a sweet gesture that touched my heart deeply.

The Venue

The Blue skies Centre at Kai poi was a very good place to hold the camp. The complex booked had 6 good sized rooms with 6 bunk beds and another 6 with 2 beds enough for 48 campers. The beds were reasonably comfortable although some girls commented that their mattresses were very thin and not comfortable on the bunk beds. The venue also included a conference room equipped with projector and screen suitable for lectures (although we brought our own), prayers and prayer tathkira مراكذت as well as other activities. The kitchen was spacious and fully equipped and with a commercial dish washer which was very convenient for washing/sterilizing several loads of dishes in a short time. The play ground is huge with

confidence coarse,swings as well as a private swimming pool.

FOLLOW-UP

There is always a need for more activities outdoor adventures and gatherings for our Muslimah youth. Most of them are attending high schools with no other or very few other Muslims. They are isolated amongst the dominant culture. Few have the knowledge, the conviction and the confidence to conduct themselves as Muslims in such an environment. They would benefit from more interaction with other Muslimahs.

On the whole the camp is an expensive infrequent event that requires a lot of organization. We have recommended in the past a youth group as a low key, less expensive, less work but most importantly with the potential to offer regular social contact between our girls in a controlled Islamic setting and to facilitate continuous gains in knowledge. However, it was short lived and did not succeed. While our youth acknowledge the importance of socializing with other muslims, at this stage there is no one prepared to lead such a group. The consensus seems to be that while they love to attend the camps, they do not want (or are unable) to actually put in the work and time to organize them. We feel that there is a need for organizing shorter Islamic oriented outings or events with minimal organizational efforts (horse riding, jet boating, canoeing/picnics, skiing trips, where the youth can get together more often. This year, with the grace of Allah, we have been successful in organizing few activities such as horse riding, regular swimming/Aqua aerobic, monthly book club/pot luck gatherings, cooking and craft classes, and Eid activities and we look forward to having more of such activities and hope to get the support needed.

Recommendations:

In conclusion, school holidays lend themselves as perfect times for family, youth and children activities. Why not use these opportunities to acquire Islamic knowledge, do righteous deeds and have fun at the same time? The benefits are enormous. Besides creating stronger family and community bonds, it may also gain additional blessings and good deeds for the Day of Judgment. Lastly, one obtains the benefits from the activity by the intention put into the activity. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "Actions are according to intentions, and for every person is that which he intended. So he whose migration was for Allah and his Messenger, then his migration was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose

Muslim: A title to maintain

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Allah's chosen ones

- The title "Muslim" carries Allah's appreciation. It is a recognition of the loyalty of the servant to his/her true master Allah
- The title Allah gives is not a mere paper or a medal, it brings Allah's blessings and mercy with it
- The title Allah gives is not for temporary name and fame in this world only rather it is for everlasting life.

So, if you have chosen to take the titles 'Muslim' then you have every reason to feel special, humble and thankful to Allah for it. No matter what some people say or think about you out of ignorance or contempt, you should never feel discouraged by it. You should feel happy and positive because you are carrying the most honorable title given by the Most Honorable Allah (Subhanahu WA Ta'aalaa).

My friends! Enjoy the title "Muslim" that Allah has chosen. Enjoy each other as Muslims as much as you can. In A hadis, Rasool [saw] said,

Call each other with names that Allah has chosen for you; Such as call Muslim, Mu'min, Abdullah and so on.

Why this title needs maintaining? This title is not like a medal that once we get it

we can keep it in the showcase for people to see. "Muslim" is a title that comes with special dignity, unique image and constant responsibilities. It requires constant looking after, constant evaluation and constant improvement in our actions.

"Muslim" is a highly dignified title given by Allah. Once someone is Muslim should maintain the dignity of his/her title. "Muslim" title carries the Image of Allah because it is given by Him. So the carrier should maintain the Image of Allah as high as possible. "Muslim" title comes with responsibilities and one should evaluate regularly whether he/she is performing the responsibilities or not.

Every Muslim needs special care about this title because:

- It is an Amanah (Trust) from Allah to test Muslims who takes best care of it
- Allah will question about this trust in the Day of Judgment
- If anyone brings shame, blame, humiliation to Allah, Muslims or Islam by neglecting this title through wrong actions then that will be a punishable sin in Allah's court
- For neglecting or abusing this title one may lose everlasting Paradise. Etc

So, each Muslim must watch himself/

herself constantly. Is he upholding the "Divine title" through his/her behaviour, conduct, dealing or actions? Is he/she promoting the image of Muslims and Islam or damaging it? Is he/she contributing towards Islamic development or ruining it? Early Muslims were acutely watchful about their talking, walking, manners etc to make sure they kept Islamic Image High in this world. Let us look at an example below:

Hazrat Omar (R.A) saw a man walking like a dead person. He shouted at him saying, "Oh Ignorant man! Why are you killing our religion Islam?" [Tafsir: Tafheemul Quran, Sura Luqman, verse 19]

He was so concerned about the image of Islam. The world understands Islam largely through the conduct and behavior of Muslims. If Muslims display weakness in Islamic conduct and ethics, indulge in inappropriate actions then others might think this is what Allah and Islam teach people. That's why Hazrat Omar corrected his fellow Muslim.

May Allah help us in maintaining the dignity of His divine title "Muslim"! Ameen!

The Islamic Girl Youth Camp Of Muslim Association of Canterbury

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migration was to attain some worldly goal or to take a woman in marriage, then his migration was for that which he migrated." (Bukhari).

The following are few suggested activities to consider in the near future:

1. Organize Islamic camps for families, for girls and for boys on regular basis.
2. Organise Islamic conferences or workshops.
3. Organize a day trip or a picnic or some sport activities (horse riding, jet boating, canoeing,...).
4. Incorporate Islamic concepts in these activities. Focus on the fun activities while maintaining an Islamic environment and experience. It just takes a little creativity and organization.
5. Plan activities for the youth and children that utilizes an Islamic theme (i.e., Qur'an recitation or a game that relies on Islamic knowledge).
6. Organize Islamic Scouting Troop for your community based upon Islamic teachings.

Planning group activities for youth is not as complex as it seems. The key is organization and cooperation of several other community members. Planning a large group activity can be overwhelming for even the most organized individual. Delegation of responsibilities and tasks is a must for any successful program. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a planning committee as the first step in planning any large activity. The second most important factor is to look at the needs of the community. What are the needs for the children? What are the age ranges of the children? What types of activities interest the children? What are the resources and finances for the activity? Other important factors include the type of activity (fun and/or education) and the duration of the activity. These are all important issues that must be addressed in planning an activity. Finally, it is time to develop a plan of action with attainable deadlines. It is important to plan activities in advance

in order to work out any unexpected problems. Last minute planning can become frantic and less enjoyable for all. Furthermore, tasks should be delegated to specific individuals within the planning committee. Larger activities may need subcommittees to carry out a variety of tasks. Finally, planning and implementing plans does not have to be an adult-only adventure. Try to involve the children as much as possible. This is especially important for the teenagers. When motivated, they have good ideas about what activities would benefit them not to mention they tend to be very zealous planners. More importantly, by involving older children in the process you are teaching them valuable skills in organization and planning which they can utilize in the Ummah as adults.

We always pray that Allah (SWT) bless all of our Islamic projects and be pleased with our efforts to serve Islam.
--Prepared by Dr. Maysoon Salama

Muslim youths hold daawah workshop in Auckland

In preparation for this year's Islam Awareness Week (IAW) coming up in August/September Muslim youths held a workshop to enhance the capacities of youths in daawah activities.

With about 50 participants from Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Hastings, Christchurch and Dunedin the two day workshop addressed topics such as Muslims in New Zealand, Daawah to Muslims, the role and activities of Voice of Islam, Daawah skills, Islamophobia and history of Muslims in New Zealand since 1969.

Speakers at the workshop included Mohammed Thompson, Rehana Alai, Mustafa Farouk, Anwar Ghani, Umarji Mohammed, Sheikh Monir El Farra and Sheikh Mohammed Zewada.

Workshop coordinator Hisham Zaoiu described the two-day event as 'very successful in equipping youths with the desired skills and competencies for daawah activities' that will be very useful in the forthcoming Islam Awareness Week and beyond.



Islam and the Environment

By Rayya Ali

"When the earth is shaken with a (violent) shaking, And the earth reveals what burdens her, And man says: What has befallen her? On that day she shall tell her story...." (Qur'an 99:1-4)

Nature and environment have always played an important part in the lives of devout Muslims. Muslims have this understanding that the Almighty has not created this world and everything in it without a reason. Everything has a purpose. In fact, we as Muslims have been commanded to find the wonderful signs of God around us so that we can increase in our awe of our Rabb – the Cherisher and Sustainer.

The environment that we live in does not only include of nature but also everything around us and everything that we make use of. Our basic necessities and needs are all part of the environment. Resources that are available for us to use are all part of the environment. The environment is the medium in which Man lives; the mother's womb is a man's first environment; home is an environment; school is an environment; the place where we live is an environment; the earth is an environment and the whole

universe is an environment. From the Islamic world view and perspective, the relationship humankind has with nature and the environment should be like that of a just ruler with his subjects. Although the ruler has power over his subjects, his subjects are a trust over which he stands and guards. He is expected to act in a responsible way (as defined by the revelation) toward them. Misuse and



abuse of his power would shift him from being a leader to being a tyrant. The end result of tyranny is nothing but a revolt against the tyrant. This is precisely what is happening between man the tyrant and nature the tyrannized. Tyranny is effective only in the short term. In Islam,

Muslims believe that man has been given a responsibility by Allah (i.e., Arabic for God) on this earth and that man will be accountable to God for his actions and the trust placed in him.

Prophet Muhammad said, "Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for his charges. The ruler who has authority over people is a guardian and is responsible for them" (Sahih Bukhari 3.46.730).

Islam has urged humanity to be kind to nature and not to abuse the trust that has been placed on the shoulders of man. In fact, to be kind to animals is an integral part of Islam for Muslims. There are two primary sources defining Islam: The Quran (Muslim Holy Book) and the Hadith (the example, sayings, and actions of Prophet Muhammad). Both emphasize the accountability and responsibility of man toward the rest of creation.

We the humankind will be accountable for everything on the day of judgement. The food we waste, the water that goes to waste and the resources that we use in haste and all that is given to us by the blessings of God and his grace. Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon us his many blessings and we as the people are responsible for taking care of it.

Turkey International Symposium

Mustafa Farouk
Chairman FIANZ Dawah & Outreach

The Symposium

The international symposium on "Solutions to Social Problems: The Prophet's (saw) Way" was organised by Hira (www.hiramagazine.com) and Yeni Ümit magazines on 5-6 May 2012 in Gaziantep Turkey.

FIANZ was invited to attend the symposium by Pearl of the Islands Foundation (PIF) a registered charity founded in 2006 by the Turkish community in New Zealand (www.pif.org.nz). The aim of PIF is to promote intercultural dialogue, education and humanitarian services. FIANZ was invited as an observer at the symposium because of its role as the umbrella organization representing the Muslims of New Zealand and as part of PIF's effort to strengthen its relationship and partner with FIANZ in some of its activities that are of mutual interest to both organizations.

The primary objective of the symposium was to bring Muslim Scholars and experts from around the world to discuss and



proffer solutions to the social problems facing the Muslim ummah today in the way of the Prophet (SAW).

About 1500 delegates from 60 countries attended the symposium. Prominent scholars and Islamic thinkers from these countries addressed the theme of the symposium among whom were Prof. Dr. Ali Goma the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Prof. Dr. Rasit Kucuk the Chairman High Council of Religious Affairs Turkey, The Mufti of Jordan, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Abbadi of Morocco, Maulana Wahudiddin of New Delhi, Sheikh Ibrahim Saleh Head of the Fatwah Council of Nigeria, Prof. Dr. Khalil Nahwi of Mauritania and many other prominent scholars from within and outside Turkey.



The conference started with a beautiful recitation of the Quran which was followed by introductory speeches by Nevzat Savaş and Dr Ergün Capan the editors of Yeni Ümit and Hira magazines respectively.

The symposium was

divided into six sessions over a period of two days. Each session had a different theme and was addressed by three speakers. The theme of the six sessions were (1) The universality of the Prophet's way and representation; (2) Social problems and solutions; (3) The Prophet's way and social life; (4) Knowledge and learning according to the way of the Prophet; (5) Peace and security of people; and (6) Respecting the predecessors.

the scholars advised against taking the ummah back 14 centuries to the time of the prophet but rather bringing the Prophet's teachings and values forward to solve modern issues facing the Muslim ummah.

The two magazines that organised the conference are part of a foundation that belong to The Hizmet (service) or popularly known as the Gülen

in small and narrow rental apartments”.

We also visited High schools, university, hospitals, and headquarters of Journalist, writers, newspapers and magazine and other foundations that are all part of the Gülen Movement. We also met with a number of businessmen and professionals who are also part of the Hizmet Movement.

General observations

The conference was well organised and provided an excellent opportunity to meet and create contacts and networks with Muslims and scholars from around the world.

The conference also showcased how movements such as the Hizmet or other voluntary organizations like FIANZ should be professionally run in order to make a difference in the world and reach out to others with wisdom as taught in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW).

Although many scholars praised the humbleness of the followers of the Movement during the conference, it was only after I had the opportunity to observe two of the leaders of the Movement including Eminent Mehmet Ali Sengul whom I met by chance at the airport in Gaziantep on our way to Istanbul that the statements of the scholars regarding the followers of the Movement crystallized in my mind. Here were two leaders of an organization worth billions of dollars, yet, they were very humble, polite, paid their own tickets, and flew economy like everyone else.

As a representative of FIANZ at the conference, and from the experience I had of the way my whole trip was organised and executed. I think we have a lot to learn from the Movement especially in areas of interfaith dialogue, volunteering, resource management including people, funds, and institutions such as schools, foundations and hospitals.

As a first time visitor to Turkey, I found the country full of history and the people very friendly and generous. As a Muslim I felt proud and spiritually uplifted by the many mosques we visited and the Islamic arts and relics that we saw. I definitely recommend the country as a good place for people of all faith to visit particularly the followers of the Abrahamic faith due to the many sites relevant to the history of these faiths scattered around the country and the hospitality of the Turkish people.



Some of the topics discussed in the six sessions include: the universality of the Prophet's way; solutions to the problems of poverty; ignorance and disunity among Muslims; living in the way of the Prophet; Ashab al-Suffa a model sacred school and lodge; the place and importance of Aisha (RA); the protection of the weak and the needy in the way of the Prophet; and respecting Islamic symbols and rituals, the companions of the Prophet and Islamic Jurists and Scholars.

The speakers identified some of the social issues facing the Muslim ummah as being caused by deviation from the ways of the Prophet (SAW) which consequently led to the rampant injustice; chauvinism, neglect and poor treatment of women; racism; nepotism; ignorance; fanaticism and extremism; tyranny and dictatorship; and the divisions among Mazhabs that prevails among the Muslims today. These problems according to the speakers can only be solved by adhering strictly to the two inseparable sources of solution viz the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (SAW). In order to effectively apply the teachings of the Prophet, one of

Movement, a transitional civic society movement inspired by the teachings of Turkish Islamic Theologian Fethullah Gülen. A message from Gülen who is currently sick and receiving treatment in USA was read at the conference in which he emphasized Quranic solutions in line with the teachings of the Prophet (SAW) as the only successful way of solving our social problems. He said that a secondary revival is needed to tackle the issues facing Muslims and that the symposium was the beginning of such a revival.

Many of the speakers at the conference praised the Gülen or Hizmet Movement as being successful in making dawah with hikmah or through practice as exemplified by the Movement's service to humanity through their schools, hospitals and other foundations. One of the scholars at the conference summed up the sentiments of those who praised the Hizmet Movement, its founder and followers when he said "these are people who symbolize the sacrifice the Prophet (SAW) made to his sahaba during his time, they sponsor more than 1000 modern state of the art schools and hospitals around the world, control foundations worth billions, and still live