

Edinburgh Celebrates Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace

A wide range of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic representatives will join in a conference, workshops, and arts and cultural events during a week long Festival centred on the theme of spiritual approaches to peace.

From Friday 27 February – Sunday 7 March, the 1st Annual Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace will bring together artists and speakers from the Sufi, Druze, Baha'i, Ismaili, Zoroastrian and other lesser known traditions, in addition to representatives of more mainstream Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Among the highlights of the Festival will include: a two day International Conference at the Quaker Meeting House (March 3-4), a public evening Multi Faith Forum at St. George's West Church on the Spiritual Foundations for Peace, an evening colloquium on Science and Spirituality (5), an Interfaith Meditation Retreat at Wiston Lodge near Biggar (5-7), and a Middle Eastern themed One World Peace and Justice Concert at St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral (6), among a wide range of education, film, theatre, music, dance, storytelling, and exhibition events and workshops, as well as services linked to the theme of the Festival.

The Festival has been jointly organized by the Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS, and the Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning, EIAL, with the support of many other organizations.

'Spiritual approaches to peace - ones that use art, music, and processes of listening and forgiveness - have an important role to play in the peace process,' said Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz, one of the event organizers. 'We're bringing together people who are already active in these approaches on the ground in the Middle East, or who have new and creative ideas about how to proceed in an area from which we are used to hearing mainly bad news.'

According to Neill Walker of the EICWS, 'Scotland has a distinctive role to play in meeting the global challenge of multifaith and cultural diversity, dialogue, and shared understanding leading to mutual spiritual enrichment. We feel that this conference and Festival will not only lead to new spiritual understandings across traditions, but it will also further contacts, understandings, and learnings between Scotland and the spiritual communities of the Middle East.'

Full information about the Festival can be obtained from these contacts below, and Festival brochures will be out around the end of January 2004. Nearer the Festival dates the Festival information will be hosted on the following website: www.eial.org

Festival Contacts:

Neill Walker,
The Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS,
4 William Black Place, South Queensferry, Edinburgh, EH30 9PZ.
Scotland. UK.
Office: +44 (0)131 331 4469, Email: njwalk1300@hotmail.com

Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz,
Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning
7 East Champanyie, Edinburgh EH9 3EL, Scotland, UK.
Office: +44 (0)7005 802 580, Email: ndk@eial.org