



...Each of us has the right to take pride in our particular faith or heritage. But the notion that what is ours is necessarily in conflict with what is theirs is both false and dangerous. It has resulted in endless enmity and conflict, leading men to commit the greatest of crimes in the name of a higher power. It need not be so. People of different religions and cultures live side by side in almost every part of the world, and most of us have overlapping identities which unite us with very different groups. We can love what we are, without hating what—and who—we are not.

– Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, 2001

[HOME](#)
[ABOUT US](#)
[PROGRAMS](#)
[HISTORY](#)
[ADVISORS](#)
[CONTACT](#)

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CORDOBA INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM:

2003 January: *Same Difference*

Same Difference – a theatrical performance representing the faith community’s response to 9/11 through dialogue, song and dance – was co-directed by Daisy Khan and two other women, one a Christian and the other a Jew. The event, co-sponsored by the ASMA Society with St. Paul and St. Andrews church and Bnai Jeshuran synagogue, presented the thought provoking feelings of ordinary New Yorkers from the three faith traditions. The show’s 16-week run was completely sold out and is now being produced as a documentary for PBS.

2003 June: *Córdoba Bread Fest: The Children of Abraham Break Bread Together*

Organized by Daisy Khan and the ASMA Society, the Cordoba Bread Fest convened over three hundred Christians, Jews and Muslims to break bread, dine together and share stories about the historic role of bread in the different Abrahamic religions and cultures. Through words, music, and theater, the evening demonstrated how something as simple as bread can transcend superficial differences and stimulate spontaneous interfaith dialogue. Sold out far in advance, the Bread Fest was co-sponsored by twelve different Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious organizations.

2003 August: *When Cultures Collide: Can We Build Dialogue?*

The Cordoba Initiative, in collaboration with the Aspen Institute, presented a program focused on intercultural understanding and multi-faith dialogue in Paepcke Auditorium on the Institute’s Aspen campus. The program – *When Cultures Collide: Can We Build Dialogue?* – was introduced by John Bennett of the Cordoba Initiative and moderated by Walter Isaacson, president and CEO of the Aspen Institute. Panelists included: Rabbi Bradley Hirschfield, vice president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL); Elaine Pagels, award-winning author and Princeton professor of religion; and Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf of the Cordoba Initiative.

2004 February: *Contemplation And Community – A Symposium on the Changing Roles of University Chaplains, Spiritual Advisors, and Deans of Religious Life*

Organized by John Bennett for the Garrison Institute in Garrison, NY, this symposium convened over sixty university chaplains and deans – representing Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism – who gathered from around the country to refresh their individual contemplative practice, share experiences and best practices related to their community

and service enrich each other. The Reverend William Sloane Coffin, one of the most influential campus religious leaders of the 20th Century, served as the symposium's Honorary Chair.

2004 May: *What's Right with Islam – A New Vision for Muslims and the West*

HarperCollins published Imam Feisal's book, *What's Right with Islam: A New Vision for Muslim and the West*. Chapter 6 of this book, *Toward a New Cordoba*, presents the Cordoba Initiative's strategies for healing the relationship between the Islamic World and the West. The Christian Science Monitor named *What's Right With Islam* to its list of the five "Best Nonfiction Books of 2004."

2004 August: *When Cultures Collide: Facing Religious Extremism in All Faiths*

The Cordoba Initiative, in collaboration with the Aspen Institute, presented the second annual *When Cultures Collide* program, focused this time on religious extremism, and organized again by John Bennett. Panelists included author Peter J. Gomes, Harvard professor and Minister of Harvard's Memorial Church; Rabbi Bradley Hirschfield, vice president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL); Princeton religion scholar Elaine Pagels; and Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf of ASMA and the Cordoba Initiative. Aspen Institute CEO Walter Isaacson moderated. The Institute's Paepcke Auditorium was filled to capacity and additional audience members had to listen via remote speakers outside the auditorium.

2004 October: *Bringing Muslim Nations into the Global Century*

Fortune Magazine published an article by Imam Feisal, entitled *Bringing Muslims Nations into the Global Century*. The article traced the history of capitalism in the western world and discussed the challenges and opportunities facing Muslim countries as they try to assimilate into the global economy.

2004 November: *The Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow (MLT)*

Organized by Daisy Khan, the ASMA Society's Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow project (MLT) convenes urbane, mostly Western-born, emerging Muslim leaders who embody a moderate expression of Islam that promotes pluralism, respect for other cultures, and human rights. In its initial 2004 meeting at the Garrison Institute, 125 young Muslim doctors, lawyers, bankers, artists, writers, academics and media professionals gathered to explore how Islam's peaceful and moderate voice can be amplified as a source of hope and inspiration for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In collaboration with Jewish and Christian leaders of the UJA, JCRC, Riverside Church and St. Bartholomew's Church, future programs will expand to include interfaith dialogues between young leaders from the three faith communities who share a common commitment to a future of cooperation.

2005 April: *Searching for Shared Values in a Divided World – A Conference of Jews, Christians & Muslims*

The Cordoba Initiative collaborated with the Aspen Institute, the Center for Workable Solutions, and the Palm Beach Fellowship of Christians & Jews to plan a major multi-cultural conference in Palm Beach that explored how shared values can illuminate a path out of conflict. Religious leaders and Middle East policy experts engaged in thoughtful dialogues on topics such as transcending religious radicalism, discerning common ground in Middle East peace efforts, and bridging the cultural divide between America and the Islamic world.

2005 August: *When God Goes to War – Good, Evil, and the Problem of the 'Other'*

John Bennett and the Cordoba Initiative organized this panel discussion in Aspen's Paepcke Auditorium to examine such issues as religion and nationalism, how religion is used to justify violence, and the concept of going to war "with God on our side." Panelists included Elaine Pagels, Rabbi Bradley Hirschfield, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf and Pastor Steve Woodrow.

2006 May: *WHY ISRAEL? WHY PALESTINE? – The Irvine Dialogue*

The Cordoba Initiative partnered with CLAL–The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership and the ASMA Society to produce this ground-breaking conference featuring Jews and Arabs examining the cultural, psychological and spiritual issues underlying the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. At the invitation of the University of California, Irvine, the conference explored the competing cultural narratives that shape each side's world view. Speakers included: Gen. Michael Herzog of the Israel Defense Force (IDF); Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, President of Al Quds University in Jerusalem; Dr. Robert Satloff, Executive Director, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Dr. Shibley Telhami, Anwar Sadat Professor of Peace & Development, University of Maryland and Senior Fellow, 152

2006 July: *Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow (MLT): The Copenhagen Conference*

The MLT's goal is to nurture a global Muslim leadership that employs Islamic and pluralistic values to enhance peace and tolerance. In the city where the Danish cartoons were published and on the first anniversary of the London bombings – 120 young, emerging Muslim leaders from 16 Western nations, representing a wide variety of world views, ethnicities, and beliefs within the Islamic heritage, focused on the Copenhagen conference's theme: *Muslim Integration in the West*. Organized by the ASMA Society, this 2nd MLT conference precipitated an electrifying forum and debate that represented a paradigm shift in Muslim thought. Newsweek journalist Christopher Dickey spoke to the group about the uniqueness of its wide spectrum of Muslim voices; and he added, "This was the best and most educational conference I've attended in the last two or three years, if not ever..."

2006 August: *The Shariah Project – Initial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur*

Convened in Malaysia by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the Shariah Project's initial meeting assembled five distinguished scholars of Islamic holy law from four countries. In addition to Imam Feisal, the group included: **Professor Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi**, Pakistan (Chairman of the Shariah Board for the State Bank of Pakistan and former president of International Islamic University); **Professor Dr. Mohammad Hashim Kamali**, Malaysia (Dean of the International Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization and Former Interim Chairman, Constitutional Review Committee, Afghanistan); **Professor Dr. Tahir Mahmood**, India (Founder/Chairman, Amity University Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, New Delhi, and former Dean of the Faculty of Law, Delhi University); **Dato' Abdul Hamid Mohamad**, Malaysia (Judge, Federal Court of Malaysia ... Malaysian Supreme Court). The Shariah Project is sponsored by the ASMA Society in cooperation with the Cordoba Initiative.

2006 November: *WISE—Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equity*

The *WISE* conference, organized by Daisy Khan and the ASMA Society and co-sponsored by the Cordoba Initiative convened 150 Muslim women leaders from 25 nations, including activists, academics, religious leaders and artists, to accelerate the leadership of Muslim women and empower them as bridge builders and change agents for their own societies, as well as the global intercultural society. *Based on the energy and enthusiasm of the initial conference, we believe the WISE movement could change the world.*