

10 February 2017

## **Interfaith Harmony Week Celebrations: Reach Out! To Love Despite All Invitations to Hate**

TORONTO: Standing united in spreading a message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in Toronto's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship, the Church of Scientology of Toronto joined members of the many diverse faiths in celebrating the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week in the first week of February 2017. The celebration this year also sent a special message of support to Canadian Muslims, particularly to the families of those who were senselessly massacred in St. Foy, Quebec.

On February 5, 2017, the Church of Scientology of Toronto held a special Sunday Service in honour of World Interfaith Harmony Week with a tribute for the St. Foy, Quebec victims and their families, inviting Imam Habeeb Alli to speak to their congregation.

Church Interfaith Director, Rev. Earl Smith gave a sermon from the writings of Church of Scientology Founder, L. Ron Hubbard, entitled, "What is Greatness?" wherein he says,

*"It requires real strength to love man. And to love him despite all invitations to do otherwise, all provocations and all reasons why one should not. Happiness and strength endure only in the absence of hate. To hate alone is the road to disaster. To love is the road to strength. To love in spite of all is the secret of greatness. And may very well be the greatest secret in this universe."*

Imam Habeeb Alli, Community Development Manager for IDRF (International Development Relief Foundation), author of 17 books, member of the Canadian Council of Imams and a Chaplain in the federal penitentiary service, thanked Church members for their years of friendship and service in the community. He acknowledged the

teachings of Mr. Hubbard and said,

*“Our message, that hopefully we can get out there is -- if I feel angry (and I have felt angry) and if I feel jaded and disturbed, I have to find that barrier within myself and climb out of it. I have to chip it away or smash it. We have to make one more day, one more life, one more community, one more generation –a better and loving generation. We're in this together. May God bless you as we try to make a difference.”*

This Sunday service was just one of several UN World Interfaith Harmony events promoted by the Toronto Steering Committee for UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. From the Multifaith Centre at the University of Toronto, to the synagogues, churches, temples and places of worship throughout Greater Toronto, faiths came together to teach, to pray, to support and to reach out. On February 6, 2017 Interfaith Director Rev. Earl Smith participated in spiritual readings by faith leaders from the Toronto Area Interfaith Council at the Metropolitan United Church for the Multifaith Vigil for Healing and Peace. Earlier in the week the Church of Scientology was also one of the sponsors for the event held at the Noor Cultural Centre, which celebrated World Interfaith Harmony week with music from many different faith traditions.

We stand united in our support of the ideals of World Interfaith Harmony to encourage mutual respect and goodwill among all faith traditions and groups of goodwill.

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