

Faith

Islam and peace

The United Nations has designated September 21st as the International Day of Peace, a commendable initiative. We shall talk today about Islam and Peace to celebrate this day, “the International Day of Peace.”

The call for peace was advocated for, and endorsed by Islam (the noble Islamic law) long before the UN or any global or local institution endorsed it. Our Lord, Exalted in Glory, said: **“O you who have believed, enter into peace completely and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”** [Quran 2: 208]. Linguists and interpreters have explained that “peace” in this context refers to reconciliation, submission, and here specifically, to Islam. Thus, the meaning is that Islam and peace are intertwined.

It is interesting to notice that the words “Islam” and “Salam” are almost the same in English, just as in Arabic. Salam means peace in Arabic. Islam is the religion of God Almighty, chosen for His servants (people), through which they engage in righteous deeds and work in devotion to Him. Islam is a religion that promotes the building of earth through brotherhood and construction, and the enrichment of faith through gratitude and contentment. Islam forbids oppression, killing, injustice, corruption on

earth, and any harm to humans, animals, or the environment (SNP 3/30/24), aiming for humanity to live in harmony and peace, with justice prevailing and virtue spreading among people.

Islam came to liberate people from the tyranny and darkness of human oppression to worship the One, the Most Glorious God (Allah, SNP 8/24/24), and to safeguard human dignity.

Islam was sent to declare, through the words of the truthful and trustworthy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him (pbuh): *“Do not envy one another, do not inflate prices to outbid one another, do not hate one another, do not turn away from one another, and do not undercut one another in trade. Be brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he does not oppress him, he does not fail him, he does not lie to him, nor does he hold him in contempt. Taqwa (piety) is here (and he pointed to his chest three times). It is enough evil for a person to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All of a Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim: his blood, his wealth, and his honor.”*

Islam prohibits anything that disrupts the tranquility of life, so one who submits to God knows only peace and peaceful co-existence. A true believer lives Islam within himself, his community, and his en-



Guest Column

HATIM HEGAB

vironment, thus enjoying a good life and becoming a good model of Islam through his actions before his words.

Islam celebrates peace at all times, as peace is the slogan of a Muslim with himself and others. A Muslim greets everyone he meets with peace (by saying: Peace be upon you), whether he/she knows them or not, and greets himself and his society as he enters and exits (a market, a building, an office, his/her home, etc...). Even when he prays, he concludes his communication with his Lord with peace. Peace is the motto of all the prophets. When God created Adam, the father of humanity, He told him: “Go and greet that group of angels and listen to how they respond to you, for that will be your greeting and the greeting of your descendants.” So, Adam said: “Peace be upon you,” and the angels responded: “Peace be upon you and the mercy of God.”

Peace is one of the names of God, The Peace is one of His known names. Whoever embodies it has adorned himself with a trait of divine beauty.

Whoever adopts peace as his motto in this world is likely to be among the people of the Abode of Peace (Paradise), where he will live in peace—a place where there is no idle talk or sin, only words of peace. That is the Garden, where the greeting of its inhabitants is “Peace” because they lived in peace in this world from sins and misdeeds, and thus they are saved in the Hereafter from the humiliating punishment.

The Islamic belief does not permit humans to be slaves to anyone except God alone. Through this understanding, the artificial distinctions between people based on faith, the color of their skin, etc..., dissolve, and they become, by God’s grace, brothers. Hatred, which only exists in the absence of true faith, also disappears. Furthermore, it grants humans security and peace of mind. God Almighty says: **“Those who have believed and not mixed their belief with injustice – those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided”** [Quran 6: 82].

Anyone who closely examines the verses of the Qur’an will find that the term ‘peace’ (Silm) and its derivatives are mentioned in over 140 verses, whereas the term ‘war’ (harb) and its derivatives appear in only six verses. This significant usage of the word directs thoughts and perspectives toward

the principle of peace in Islam. The Quran (Allah) says, **“O believers! When you struggle in the cause of Allah, be sure of who you fight. And do not say to those who offer you (greetings of) peace, “You are no believer!”— seeking a fleeting worldly gain. Instead, Allah has infinite bounties (in store). You were initially like them then Allah blessed you (with Islam). So be sure! Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do.”** [Quran 4: 94]. The Quran also says, **“When the believers in Our revelations come to you, say, “Peace be upon you! Your Lord has taken upon Himself to be Merciful. Whoever among you commits evil ignorantly (or recklessly) then repents afterwards and mends their ways, then Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”** [Quran 6: 54]. Also, we have, **“And surely Our messenger-angels came to Abraham with good news (of a son - Issac, after Ismael). They greeted (him with), “Peace!” And he replied, “Peace (be upon you)!” Then it was not long before he brought (them) a (fat,) roasted calf.”** [Quran 11:69].

Peace is one of the principles that Islam deeply ingrained in the hearts of Muslims, becoming a part of their faith and a fundamental belief. From the moment Islam dawned and its light spread, it proclaimed a resounding call

to peace across the world’s horizons. Islam has called for peace and laid out a wise plan to guide humanity towards it, outlining the best way for humanity to advance toward progress while living under the shelter of security and peace.

Islam legislated fair rulings that organize people’s relationships with each other, clarifying their respective rights and duties, and defining permissible and impermissible actions. This promotes a spirit of love and peace in society. Islam also made governance a central pillar for establishing peace in the community, mandating justice and making it a source of security and protection, guaranteeing rights for both Muslims and non-Muslims, even enemies. As Allah, the Almighty, says: **“Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness”** [Quran 5: 8].

Islam did not make the call to peace a vague spiritual concept. Nor did it stop at merely praising this principle. Instead, it organizes all of the different relationships of human life in a way that leads one to peace without falling into humiliation or degradation. It applied peace and security in all aspects of life.

To contact the author: hatim@gmx.us
For more information: www.icstillwater.org

American pastor detained in China for nearly 20 years has been released

WASHINGTON – A Christian pastor from California has been freed from China after nearly 20 years behind bars and is back home in the U.S., the State Department said Monday.

David Lin, 68, was detained after he entered China in 2006, later convicted of contract fraud and sentenced to life in prison, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and advocacy groups.

“Praise God! We got the call late last night!!! Dad is free and over Alaska now,” the pastor’s

daughter, Alice Lin, said by text message Sunday to Bob Fu, a longtime supporter and the founder of China Aid, an U.S.-based advocacy group for persecuted activists in China. Fu shared with The Associated Press a screenshot of the text sent before the Lins reunited.

The Biden administration has been working on David Lin’s case and those of other wrongly detained Americans in China for years and have raised them at every meeting with senior Chinese officials, including Sec-

retary of State Antony Blinken’s meeting this summer with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Laos. Such meetings aim to keep communication open between Washington and Beijing despite escalating tensions.

“We welcome David Lin’s release from prison in the People’s Republic of China. He has returned to the United States and reunited with his family for the first time in nearly 20 years,” State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters. “We’ll continue to push the

release of other Americans,” he said. “It’s something that we continue to work on. It’s an important step forward, and we’re going to continue to push for the release of other Americans.”

Lin frequently traveled to China in the 1990s to spread the gospel, according to China Aid, which says Lin sought a license from the Chinese government to carry out Christian ministry. It’s unlikely he was granted permission, and he was detained in 2006 when assisting a church not authorized by Chinese officials,

the group said.

Lin was formally arrested in 2009 on suspicion of contract fraud and, after a court review, was sentenced to life in prison, China Aid said.

The charge is frequently used against leaders of churches that operate outside state-sponsored faith groups, and it is a crime that Lin denied, according to the Dui Hua Foundation, a humanitarian group that advocates for prisoners in China.

– AP

Worship at the church of your choice this week

For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD.
Repent and live!



Ezekiel 18:32

Stillwater Bible
Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers
JB Bond, Senior Pastor

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Worship Service	8:30 a.m.
G.R.O.W. Groups	9:45 a.m.
Worship Service	11:00 a.m.
Kids' Church	11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays
Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297) 7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Stillwater Bible Institute	6:30 p.m.
Impact Youth	6:30 p.m.
Bible Kids	6:30 p.m.

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Stillwaterbible.org (405) 564-5794

Crosspointe CHURCH

Sunday School - 9:30
Sunday AM Worship - 10:30
Sunday PM Family Service - 6:00
Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

1807 N. Jardot
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Worship Service • 11:00am
WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES
Begin at 6:00pm
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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

www.fumcstw.org
400 W. 7th • 372-5854

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship	8:30am & 11:10am
Sunday School	10:00am
Closer Walk	10 am Family Life Center

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH

4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

Sunday School
9 am
Worship Service
8 am & 10:30 am

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Independent Baptist
Expository Preaching

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday	10:30am
Thursday	7:30pm

723 E. 17th

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

Sunday Worship

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School
11:00 a.m. - in person, online
On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3
and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

SUNNYBROOK CHRISTIAN CHURCH

421 E. Richmond Rd. | sunnybrookccc.org

SUNDAY SERVICES
8:15 AM | 9:45 AM | 11:15 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM - Student, College & Adult	KIDS CHURCH All Services
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WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHURCH
6:30 PM - Kids, Students & Adult Studies

Stillwater Church of Christ
stillwatercoc.org

Your place for "Faith, Family and Friends"

SUNDAY
Meeting Times

Bible Study	9:30 AM
Worship	10:30 AM
Bible Study	5:00 PM

WEDNESDAY
Bible study 7:00 PM

821 N. DUCK • 372-7439

Southside Baptist Church of Stillwater

1223 S. Perkins Rd.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM + 6 PM
WEDNESDAY YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30

Paul Hutchinson - Pastor
Address - 1223 S. Perkins Rd.
Phone: 408-372-2411
Email: southsidestillwater@gmail.com

The Islamic Society of Stillwater

616 N. Washington St.
Friday (Weekly) Prayers
1:40 PM - 2:10 PM
For Daily Prayer Times
www.icstillwater.org

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

711 N. Country Club Rd.

Sunday Mass 8:30 11:15 a.m. 1 p.m. (en español) Tue & Thu Mass 12:10 p.m. Wednesday Mass 12:10 p.m. 6 p.m. (en español)	Friday Mass 12:10 p.m. Saturday Mass 9 a.m. 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass) Confessions Tues-Fri 11:30-12 p.m. Wednesday 5 p.m. Saturday 9:45-11 a.m.
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405-372-6886 www.sfxstillwater.org

Zion Lutheran Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

www.zionlutheranstw.org

John E. Wackler, Pastor
504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703