

Islamic Society Reaches Out To Other Faiths

D.C. convention to feature popular pastor; area group hopes Obama will attend



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Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: This is another data point of how rapidly the foundation is being laid for a global religion, which will support the escalating emergence of global government. Both are prophesied (in the books of Daniel and Revelation) to occur in the last days before Jesus returns. The dumbing down of the Christian gospel in order to make it palatable to the all-inclusive global religion would not be possible if not for false teachers like Rick Warren who are leading the apostasy among those who profess to be Christians. This apostasy was also predicted in the scriptures as a last days event.

2 Tim 4:2-4 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (NKJ)

The Plainfield-based Islamic Society of North America is holding out hope President Barack Obama might make an appearance at its convention this year in Washington, D.C., over the Fourth of July weekend.

But even if Obama doesn't show, the nation's largest Muslim organization already landed a high-profile guest: Saddleback Church pastor Rick Warren.

He will join a panel discussion that is the main session of a four-day convention expected to attract 40,000 Muslims from across the country. Warren will be joined on the panel by Islamic Society President Ingrid Mattson and noted Muslim scholar Hamza Yusuf, among others.

"We are living in a pluralist country. It is critical for us to have positive [relationships](#) with people of other faiths," said Sayyid Syeed, a longtime leader with the Islamic Society

who focuses on building the organization's interfaith ties. "(Warren) realizes that it is equally critical for him to work with people of other faiths."

Syed invited Warren during a gathering they attended last year at the White [House](#). Since then, the Islamic Society has introduced Warren to Muslim groups in California, where his 20,000-member church is based.

Warren was unavailable for an interview, said Kristin Cole of A. Larry Ross Communications, which handles his media contacts.

While an appearance by the nation's most prominent evangelical pastor at a gathering of its oldest Muslim organization might seem an unlikely pairing, scholars and observers from various perspectives say it makes sense.

"ISNA is very interested in extending their connections with Protestant groups," said Rafia Zakaria, an Indiana lawyer and associate editor at [altnuslim.com](#), a Web site that looks at Muslim issues. "Having a figure as high profile as him gives them legitimacy to extend those kinds of alliances with church groups that have a significant amount of power in the United States."

In the past two years, the Islamic Society has forged friendships with the Union of Reform Judaism and the American Baptist Churches, USA.

For Warren, author of the best-selling "The Purpose Driven Life" who gave the invocation at Obama's inauguration, the visit to a Muslim convention also fits, said Tulane University assistant sociology professor Shayne Lee, co-author of "Holy Mavericks: Evangelical Innovators and the [Spiritual](#) Marketplace."

Warren has conducted workshops with Jewish rabbis, Lee said, offering tips on how to build their congregations, and established ties with the gay rights community in California. He also was unafraid to endure criticism from conservatives about his role in the Obama inauguration.

"He is not a typical isolationist evangelical," Lee said. "He is more of a post-modern leader who is willing to look at new terrain to see how he can extend his leadership and his influence."

That such a high-profile evangelist is willing to take risks, Lee said, marks an important moment in American religion.

"ISNA has faced a lot of challenges in recent years," Zakaria said. "It is crucial to them to have these alliances with other faith-based groups."

Set in Washington over the Independence Day holiday, the convention will try to address freedom from a uniquely Muslim-American perspective with an all-American theme that

is also the title of the session Warren will take part in: "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."