



I W C Newsletter

Concord House, 1407 Chapala St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101
www.worldculture.org



James Madison

Thomas Jefferson

“To renew the universal vision behind the American Dream through authentic affirmations of freedom, excellence and self-transcendence in an ever-evolving Republic of Conscience”

Aim 2
Declaration of Interdependence
Institute of World Culture
Inaugurated July 4, 1976

Religious Freedom in a Republic of Conscience

The American Revolution is typically perceived as a struggle for political independence and the right of self-government. Resolutions, pamphlets and street protests expressed this right and mobilized a public consensus to fight a war against the mightiest empire in the world at that time. Historians are now discovering how the principles used to justify this battle for political independence were used subsequently by the new state governments to improve economic opportunities and begin a movement towards political and social equality. Less obvious are the measures that several state legislatures took to separate churches from governmental support and protect religious freedom. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison led an historic political battle to have [*The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom*](#) approved by the Virginia Legislature in 1786. This law declared that: "all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in nowise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities."

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Theme for 2009: Expressions of Spiritual Striving

Aim 5: To deepen awareness of man's spiritual striving and its rich variety of expression in the religions, philosophies and literatures of humanity. —Declaration of Interdependence

UPCOMING EVENTS



Faith and Reason in the American Founding Vision

Founding Day Lecture:

Saturday, July 4

7:30 - 9:00 pm

7:00 pm Open House

Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.

Santa Barbara

Speaker: Carolyn Dorrance

This commemoration of the founding of the United States in 1776 and the inauguration of the Institute of World Culture in 1976 will explore the competing influence of faith-based religion and 18th century rationalism. Was the American Republic founded by rationalists dedicated to a religion explained by reason and separated from political dialogue, or did the evangelical enthusiasm of the first “Great Awakening” determine the place and purpose of religion in American society and politics? How have these competing visions of religion created both inspiration and tension in American public life until the present?

For program information, call (805) 967-1055.

July 2009 Film Series

Film and Discussion:

Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.

Santa Barbara

Host: Robert Moore

3 Saturdays in July



July 11

The Fountain (2006)

Director Darren Aronofsky’s imaginative film interweaves death and life, and present-past-future times, and the subjective and objective experiences of the characters, played by Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz, in an enigmatic vision of beauty.



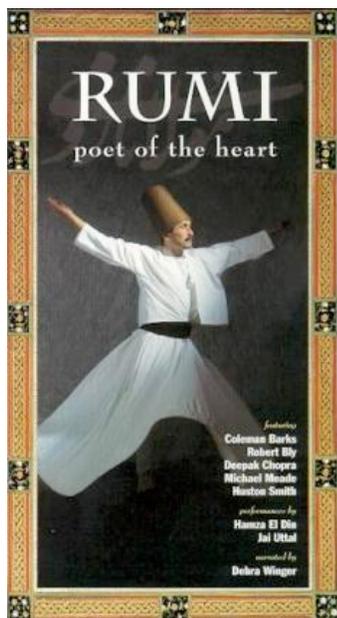
July 18

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring (2003)

Korean director Kim Ki-Duk tells a Buddhist-like fable of a monk teaching a boy through the seasons of life. Set in a pristine mountain lake setting, we are periodically given Zen jolts to awaken us.

UPCOMING EVENTS
July 2009 Film Series

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July 25
Rumi: Poet of the Heart (2004)

This thoughtful film is a devotional work that gently guides viewers through an introduction to the life and spirit of one of America's most widely read poets. Join with Coleman Barks and others to explore Rumi's compelling inner, secret world.

Events are free of charge but donations are appreciated.

Library Hours in July

The Institute's Library will be open from 7 - 9 p.m. on the following Wednesdays: July 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th. For more information, call 967-1055.

Why is this precedent-setting freedom so important, and how is such freedom essential to the emergence of a world culture? First, if religion is believed to express truths that are sacred, should we not keep them free of the profane politics whereby governments typically debate decisions? Political debate is not designed to express ineffable religious ideas. Even to speak of sacred truths in secular debates is to muddy their character. When governments attempt to establish or enforce particular religious doctrines and practices and ostracize others, they assume an authority ill suited to the knowledge and the purposes of political authority. What special knowledge do legislatures have to make religious distinctions and impede the free investigation into truths purported to be divine in source and character? Also, if religious organizations get involved in politics, they risk, as Roger Williams the founder of Rhode Island pointed out, the

In July

Anniversaries

- 1st Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, German philosopher, mathematician b. 1646
- 2nd Hermann Hesse, German-Swiss poet, novelist, painter, Nobel laureate b. 1877
- 3rd Franz Kafka, Austro-Hungarian novelist b. 1883
- 4th Nathaniel Hawthorne, American novelist, short story writer b. 1804
- 6th John (Jan) Huss, Czech religious thinker, philosopher, reformer d. 1415
- 6th Tenzin Gyatso, Tibetan leader, XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet b. 1935
- 9th Peter Paul Rubens, Flemish Baroque painter b. 1577
- 10th William the Silent, Prince of Orange, Dutch statesman, founder of the Dutch Republic d. 1584
- 10th Sir William Blackstone, English jurist, professor b. 1723
- 11th John Quincy Adams, American diplomat, 6th U.S. President b. 1767
- 12th Henry David Thoreau, American author, poet, transcendentalist b. 1817
- 13th Julius Caesar, Roman military and political leader and ruler b. 102/100 B.C.E.
- 14th/24th Isaac Bashevis Singer, Polish-born American author, Nobel Prize laureate b. 1904
- 15th Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch painter, printmaker b. 1606
- 15th Thomas Bulfinch, American writer, mythologist b. 1796

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purity of their distinctive mission.

Secondly, secular laws contain the threat of coercion which is always antithetical to religious pursuit. Religion is the fruit of a search both intellectual and experimental. Such a search is a fundamental freedom for every human being or a "natural right" in the language of the 18th century. Introducing a pressure of coercion or conformity aborts the integrity and creative aspect to such a search. The Virginia Act claims that "Almighty God has created the mind free" and that all attempts to influence it by "temporal punishments or burdens, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness." This is particularly damaging if religion is seen as the source of moral commitments which must be self-chosen if they are to have meaning and value. The process of individuation that religion may provide for some can be a parallel component of the ideal of self definition

expressed in the ideology of the American Revolution. If America is to become the land of free and self-defined individuals governed by conscience, surely that opportunity must include a freedom so fundamental to individual integrity as religious freedom. This includes the freedom to reject religious beliefs and make alternative affirmations of what one regards as most true and real and worthy of mental and moral commitments.

Thirdly, free thinking, confident individuals are more likely to become tolerant members of a community. Diversity becomes not a threat but a teacher. The views of others contribute to the breadth and depth of public dialogue when tolerance and trust encourage sincere listening. The Founders of the American Republic had faith in the power of reason to discover consensus amid a diversity of viewpoints, but dogmatic authority had no place in that process. Instead participants in public dialogue needed to rely on philosophical concepts of justice, equality and the common good as well as the

In July

Anniversaries (con't.)

- 16th/17th Jean Baptiste Corot, French landscape painter, printmaker b. 1796
- 18th Robert Hooke, English natural philosopher, polymath b. 1635
- 18th Nelson Mandela, South African activist, former President of South Africa b. 1918
- 19th Edgar Degas, French painter, sculptor, printmaker b. 1834
- 20th Francesco Petrarch, Italian scholar, poet, Father of Humanism b. 1304
- 20th/22nd Gregor Mendel, Austrian Augustinian priest, scientist b. 1822
- 24th Simon Bolivar, Venezuelan general, political leader b. 1783
- 25th Thomas À Kempis, German Catholic monk, mystic, author d. 1471
- 26th George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright, Nobel laureate b. 1856
- 26th Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist b. 1875
- 26th Aldous Huxley, English writer, essayist b. 1894
- 28th Jean de La Fontaine, French poet, fabulist b. 1621
- 29th Dag Hammarskjöld, Swedish diplomat, Secretary-General

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"moral sense" that Jefferson spoke of. Articulation and application of such concepts could be nourished by a variety of religious beliefs and philosophical principles without resorting to a sectarian absolutism. Thereby authentic religious commitment is consistent with responsible citizenship and can sustain participation in the complex process of building consensus for the goals and values of a community.

Might not this faith in constructive dialogue nourished by freely chosen and rationally understood principles contribute to the emergence of a world culture? Surely thoughtful participation in a global dialogue about human needs and values requires the development of the human potential to think, make moral choices, empathize and cooperate with a great diversity of people. Religious freedom when linked with creative imagination and tolerance can be a source of guidance for discussion

about the priorities of a community of mankind. Since religious sectarianism and coerced conformity have been such a prevalent source of violence and war historically, it is imperative that the moral and practical necessity of religious freedom be recognized. Thereby all members of the human community can freely seek their self-defined individuality; the ideal of a Republic of Conscience that the Founding Brothers envisioned but could not instantiate in their lifetimes could serve as a foundation stone in the world culture of the future.

Carolyn Dorrance



**Looking Forward
Impressionism as a
Philosophy of Life
Forum: Saturday,
August 1, 2009
4:00 – 6:00 pm
1407 Chapala St.,
Santa Barbara
Speaker: Arden Rose**

In July

Observances

- 4th Independence Day celebrated in the United States
- 5th Discovery of radio waves by Karl Jansky announced in 1933
- 11th Breakthrough in the discovery of infinitesimal calculus by Leibniz in 1675
- 14th Storming of the Bastille marked the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789, celebrated annually as Bastille Day
- 15th Inquisition abolished in Spain by Royal Decree in 1834
- 16th First atomic bomb tested at Los Alamos, New Mexico, U.S. in 1945
- 16th/17th First photograph of a star taken by William Bond in 1850
- 20th First human beings stepped onto the moon's surface in 1969
- 20th First successful landing of a space vehicle on Mars in 1972
- 30th Society of Freemasons opens an American lodge in Boston in 1733

Undated

- Breakthrough in the foundation of quantum mechanics by Heisenberg in 1925
- First world atlas published in 1477

Membership Information
 Student Membership: \$15 annually
 Individual Membership: \$35 annually
 Supporting Membership: \$70 annually
 Sustaining Membership: \$350 annually