

Forum On Racism Held in Las Vegas

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Las Vegas, NV – The monthly peace forum held on July 20, 2016 at the Las Vegas City Hall discusses the issue on racism. The theme of the program *“How Fear Affects Actions and Attitudes”* picked the interest of twenty-one attendees representing the community.

The forum opened with an Invocation from Rabbi Sanford Marks of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police, office of community Engagement, as well as being on the board of the Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada. A short video about the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) was shown for the benefit of those who are new to UPF.

To follow, was a lively forum with 4 panelists: Ms. Jo Cato of Periwinkle Marketing, who is the Public Information Officer for the NAACP, was the moderator of the event.



Among the four panel members were Mr. James Rigney of the Las Vegas Family Church, Mr. Rodney Smith, publisher of *Our Own Voices* Magazine, and a former candidate for US Congress. In addition, was Mrs. Deborah Reyes, the Outreach Coordinator for the Office of Community Engagement for the LVMPD and Ms. Jo Cato of Periwinkle.

This month's the topic was how fear affects people's actions and attitudes. The panel and the participants of the forum were among those involved in social media, interfaith activities, law enforcement, academics, and the general population.

Among the topics discussed were:

- The police are not afraid of the public but are afraid that things will not be resolved unless religious leaders and their various faith based organizations unite around our common values to bring about a true, long-lasting peace to the community. It is important to deal with whatever is causing fear as it stops good connection between people. We should promote that we are all “one family under God”.



- Black Lives Matter: It appears there is a movement in the USA to divide all people into groups which are prompted by that movement to accuse one another and distrust one another. Deborah spoke of being aware that other young people have concerns and are seeking to express themselves thru the Black Lives Matter movement. Rodney Smith spoke of having a campaign like “Smokey the Bear” to reach children’s hearts and minds that all people have value. James Rigney said love minded community leaders and religious leaders must come up with a plan and carry it out to heal our country.
- The press could be enabling the problems of fear by only focusing on situations promoting fear. Fear sells as much as sex sells, maybe more. The press is enabling a vicious cycle and making money off of it. The Fall of our first human ancestors resulted in the first fear, and this fear and promiscuity, jealousy, arrogance and the broken family has been multiplying ever since. We need to unite and work on a solution.



- Deborah Reyes, the Outreach Coordinator, Office of Community Engagement for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Dept. was concerned about the rise of reports of discrimination.
- There was concern that the media has agendas that lead to disruption in the community and bring about division and fear.
- Representatives from the Nation of Islam expressed concern that there is racial bias in the media and how incidents are reported.
- We need parents who are centered on loving one another, their family, their community, and their nation. Without loving parents, children will not be taught to love their brothers and sister, their neighbors, their community, or their family. Innocent people are suffering and hurt because of the breakdown of the family. Without caring parents, the family breaks down, and so do our children and so does our country.

Immediately following the panel discussion, participants were invited to ask questions or comment on the panel member’s remarks. Toward the end of the event there was the appointment of five new Ambassadors for Peace.

Following was a long lunch with lively discussion and fellowship. We all realized that we are all parts of one big family in need of finding the way to unite into one.

Las Vegas Peace forums are held every 3rd Wednesday of the month.