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“Battle for the Soul of the Nation” – Secular and religious organizations co-sponsor forum on ethics of torture and human rights

A growing national campaign against the use of torture by the U.S. government will touch down in Portland on Wednesday, July 23, when several religious and secular organizations sponsor a one-day forum on “The Ethics of Torture and Human Rights.” *What is torture? Why do most religions find the use of torture to be morally repugnant? What international laws and treaties restrict the use of torture? Is there a universal human right that prohibits the use of torture under all circumstances or are there special situations that justify the use of torture?* These questions and more will be addressed during the day’s discussions.

George Hunsinger, PhD, founder of the *National Religious Campaign Against Torture* (NRCAT) and professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Seminary, will be the lunchtime keynote speaker, presenting “A Battle for the Soul of Our Nation: Why Torture Matters.” Other speakers include:

- Richard Amesbury, PhD, professor of religion and ethics at Claremont School of Theology.
- Jeff Bachman, chair of the Board of Amnesty International USA and an attorney with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- Alison Brysk, PhD, professor of political science at University of California, Irvine, and author or editor of six books on international human rights topics.
- Dr. J. David Kenzie, director of the Oregon Torture Treatment Center at OHSU.
- Steven T. Wax, federal public defender for Oregon and author of “When Kafka Came to America.”
- Travis Hall, attorney and former Army captain in the Judge Advocate General in Iraq.
- Mike “Abudharr” Branch, an advisory board member of the Muslim Educational Trust (MET).
- Rabbi Maurice Harris, Temple Beth Israel in Eugene and member of Rabbis for Human Rights.

The forum will be held on Wednesday, July 23, 2008, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 NE Hancock Street, Portland, Ore. The cost is \$15 (includes lunch), and the registration deadline is July 16. Visit www.emoregon.org to download the registration brochure, or call (503) 221-1054 for more information.

The event is sponsored by Amnesty International, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon; Jewish Federation of Portland Community Relations Committee; Muslim Educational Trust; National Religious Campaign

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ ■ Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades ■ Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

Against Torture; Oregon Area Jewish Committee; and Willamette University Center for Religion, Law and Democracy.

George Hunsinger will also give his presentation on July 23, 7:30 p.m., at Central Presbyterian Church in Eugene, and on July 24, 12 p.m., at Nativity Lutheran Church in Bend.