

SAUDI AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZES UNIVERSAL VALUES ENSHRINED IN ALL FAITHS

Religions for Peace, 08 October 2010

WASHINGTON - The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir hosted a reception entitled "*Religions for Peace to Advance Multi-Religious Cooperation.*" The event was attended by religious leaders, including the Nunciature to the U.S. Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Mr. Rashad Hussain, U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ms. Mara Vanderslice, Deputy Director, White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace* and other U.S. government officials, including high-level officials from the U.S. Department of State and Saudi government officials.

The reception highlighted the importance the Saudi government places on interfaith dialogue as a means to achieve international peace. In late 2007, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz took action on his realization that dialogue among religions and cultures is the only way to overcome the challenges facing all nations and people. King Abdullah first discussed the idea with Pope Benedict XVI during a visit to the Vatican in November 2007. Since then four international conferences to promote interfaith dialogue have occurred in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Madrid, Spain, New York, and Geneva, Switzerland.

Ambassador Al-Jubeir emphasized that co-existence and understanding are central pillars in Islam and spoke to the misunderstanding of Islam resulting from deviants who pervert the true values of Islam. He stressed that dialogue between faiths is critical to overcome issues of international concern saying, "We must reach out and understand each other. We must acknowledge that we all share the same concerns - the breakdown of values, materialism, the disintegration of the family, crime and drug abuse, and a tendency on the part of some to divide rather than unite. And we must use what is most sacred to us - our respective faiths - to bring us together.