

February

RELIGION AND GENOCIDE IN BOSNIA



MICHAEL SELLS

Wednesday, February 18th

USF Tampa Library Grace Allen Room

4:00 PM

USF LIBRARIES HOLOCAUST & GENOCIDE STUDIES CENTER 2009 LECTURE SERIES

Shortly after declaring its independence from the Former Yugoslavia and gaining international recognition, the new nation of Bosnia came under assault. The genocidal nature of the attacks on civilian population and historical heritage left southern Europe on the edge of wider disintegration and threatened to help bring about the Clash of Civilizations between Islam and the West that some authors predicted was inevitable.

In this talk, Michael Sells examines the role of religious narratives, symbols, institutions, and beliefs in motivating and justifying acts of genocide and "ethnic cleansing," the possibility that religion can play a role in the post-conflict healing of Bosnian society, and the suggestion, made by influential Bosnian scholars and peacemakers, that the near destruction and remarkable survival of Bosnia offers both a warning and a hope for the post Cold War World.

Michael Sells is the John Henry Barrows Professor of Islamic History and Literature in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago.

His book, "The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia," has been cited by former president Clinton as his favorite Balkans reference.

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