FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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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 Against Torture; Presbyterian Church (USA)–Presbytery of the Cascades; Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) — Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

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) • 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.