

News Release from R. Zed
For immediate release (picture attached)

Religious leaders seek Idaho Senator's apology who termed Hindu faith & gods "false"

In a remarkable interfaith gesture; various Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Native American spiritualist, etc., leaders have urged public apology from Idaho Senator from Cottonwood, Sheryl L. "Sherry" Nuxoll, who reportedly said on March three: "Hindu is a false faith with false gods".

She made this statement in a media interview regarding historic first Hindu invocation of Idaho State Senate by Hindu statesman Rajan Zed on March three, which she and two other state senators reportedly refused to attend.

Different religious leaders asking for Nuxoll's apology include: Rt. Rev. Dan Thomas Edwards, Episcopal Bishop of Nevada; Rita K. Sloan, Life-Peace-Justice Commission Coordinator of Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno; Matthew T. Fisher, Buddhist leader from Nevada; Dr. Uma V. Mysorekar, President of Hindu Temple Society of North America; Rabbi ElizaBeth W. Beyer, Jewish leader in California and Nevada; Brian E. Melendez, American Indian spiritualist; Rev. Richard L. Smith, a United Church of Christ pastor in Nevada; Rev. Stephen L. Child of American Clergy Leadership Conference; Andy Hill, Director of For Goodness Sake Spirituality Center in California; Church of Inner Light Founder Laura A. Peppard; Rev. June H. Canak, Unification Church leader; well-known Hindu monk Swami Poojananda Saraswati; and Paula J. McDonough, Christian activist.

A group of Idaho Buddhist leaders, including Boise Institute for Buddhist Studies Director Dan Black, in a joint statement, said: Being a public official, it was highly inappropriate and insensitive for Ms. Nuxoll to call a major religion "false." To show responsibility, respect and understanding that her words were hurtful to the Hindu community, Ms. Nuxoll should apologize.

Nevada Episcopal Bishop Edwards, in a letter to Idaho Legislative Services Office, wrote: As a former Idahoan who dearly loves the Gem State, I was pleased that the Idaho State Senate invited Rajan Zed to say the invocation at a recent session...It was therefore disappointing to me that certain Senators protested his prayer and spoke disparagingly of his faith. An apology certainly seems to be in order...we believe that truth is best discovered where all viewpoints can be expressed.

Father Charles T. Durante, a senior Roman Catholic pastor, stated: I find it sad that some legislators in Idaho could not respect the importance of religious diversity by their presence at a brief prayer.

Rabbi Beyer stressed that Nuxoll "should be called upon to offer a public apology and perhaps even be sanctioned by the Senate for her inappropriate, insensitive and insulting remarks".

Buddhist Fisher pointed out: Such divisive comments by public officials are detrimental to the fabric of our democracy...The true measure of a democracy is how it treats the minority.

Hill of Truckee (California) noted: I am a Christian. And I don't feel that my faith and my relationship with God would suffer in any way by being present at and grateful for an opening prayer offered by a Hindu.

Idaho Senate, upper house in the State Legislature, started its day with ancient Hindu mantras on March third, said to be a first since Idaho acquired statehood in 1890. It contained verses from *Rig-Veda*; the oldest existing scripture of the mankind still in common use; besides *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad-Gita*, both ancient Hindu scriptures. Rajan Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism, delivered this invocation in Sanskrit and English after sprinkling water drops from river Ganga, considered holy by Hindus.

Details of the picture attached:

Hindu statesman Rajan Zed (middle) with Idaho Governor C. L. "Butch" Otter (left) and Idaho Lieutenant Governor Brad Little (right) just before the historic first Hindu invocation of Idaho State Senate.

