

Rabbi to Discuss Taking Back Our Country From The Religious Right at Burke Lecture Nov. 9 at UCSD

October 18, 2006

Richard A. Mauro

Rabbi Michael Lerner, spiritual leader, activist, author and editor, will speak on *Taking Back Our Country from the Religious Right: The Politics and Theology of Spiritual Progressives* at 8 p.m. Nov. 9 in the Price Center Ballroom at the University of California, San Diego. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Co-chair of the newly formed Network of Spiritual Progressives, Lerner will discuss timeless theological and political issues that remain relevant in contemporary society. Drawing upon his reading of the religious and spiritual insights of many traditions, he will attempt to shed light on the religious issues that emerged in the 2006 election and will likely continue to shape the 2008 elections.

A possible short-term victory for the Democrats does not eliminate the powerful influence of the Religious Right, Lerner says, and government led by Democrats may become "religious right lite" unless liberals and progressives adopt a new spiritual world view and strategy. Lerner will propose a comprehensive strategy, the *Spiritual Covenant with America*, the platform for the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

Lerner received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley and a doctorate in social/clinical psychology from the Wright Institute, Berkeley. A longtime Bay Area resident, he is the author of 10 books, including *The Politics of Meaning*, *Healing Israel/Palestine* and *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation*. His most recent book, *The Left Hand of God* (Harpers, 2006) is a national best-seller.

Of Lerner and *The Left Hand of God*, Cornel West, professor of religion at Princeton University, wrote: "Lerner is the most significant prophetic public intellectual and spiritual leader of our generation. Secular intellectuals and those who yearn for a major change in the direction of American society must read this book - and join with religious and spiritual people to build the kind of strategy Lerner develops."

Underlying the combination of Judaism and activism, Lerner has a continuing interest in the psychology of domination and freedom. As editor of *Tikkun Magazine*, the interfaith voice of religious and spiritual progressives, he has worked to bring together intellectuals from various communities. The magazine was founded as an alternative to *Commentary*, a journal that often supports conservative approaches to social conflict.

Lerner's visit is sponsored by the Burke Lectureship, an endowed lecture series at UCSD which honors the memory of Eugene M. Burke, a Paulist priest, teacher, theologian, church historian, and scholar. After his retirement from Catholic University in 1976, Burke was closely associated with UCSD as a member of the Paulist ministry to students and as a member of the UCSD Catholic community until his death in 1984. The Burke Lectures focus on the religious dimensions of being human, exploring the function and responsibility of religion in society and its role in forming social and moral values.

For further information call Dick Mauro (858) 453-4618 or locate the Burke Lecture web page at: <http://burkelecture.ucsd.edu>.

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