

SCENARIO for UNIT 1a

The Oak Park/South Sac (OPSS) City Repair Initiative is inspired by the City Repair Project in Portland, Oregon (see www.cityrepair.org). OPSS City Repair has just kicked off its fall "Placemaking" efforts in one Oak Park neighborhood whose residents have been wanting to strengthen their community ties. OPSS City Repair staff provided organizing tools and materials to help them paint and decorate a central intersection, where people from surrounding blocks are spontaneously beginning to gather (see link in on-line schedule to YouTube video, "Transform Space Into Place"). City Repair staff have made it known that they are interested in having neighbors hold events in that space that will further strengthen people's relationships (i.e., the "social web").

Seeing the popularity of this public neighborhood space, members of two local churches and a mosque come forward with proposals. Although some City Repair staff are uncomfortable with using the space for religious purposes, others point out that the request is coming from the very same neighbors who have worked so hard to make the intersection such a dynamic meeting place, and neighbors from these different religious groups seem to be on fairly good terms with one another.

Knowing that you have studied medieval Indian practices that strengthen neighbors' relationships with one another (the "social web"), the City Repair staff consults you about the options proposed by the three groups (see also links in on-line schedule):

- A. Members of a large nearby Baptist church & community center would like to **create &** show a **documentary** about the life of the **former Christian athlete who is now Sacramento's mayor**, which focuses on the way Christian ideals shaped this athlete turned politician's personal sense of mission. The group knows this would be a public event, open to people of all (or no) faiths.
- B. Neighbors who attend a small Pentacostal church at the other end of the neighborhood propose to hold a gathering, reading the story of Pentacost from *Acts of the Apostles* to inspire **repetitive singing of Jesus's name**, during which participants express devotion through various forms of movement.
- C. Others who are part of a small Islamic center which also borders the neighborhood have asked to hold a gathering to hear **stories of Muhammad and his followers** (hadith--see this modern animated telling), especially those that emphasize Muhammad's commitment to peaceful religious struggle. These would be told by an elder known for his storytelling skill.

Having heard from you that these kinds of events are similar to Mughal court histories and Vaishnavite & Sikh practices of medieval India, the City Repair staff asks if you might **offer some advice about how to facilitate these activities effectively**, given that they want these practices to successfully strengthen relationships in this neighborhood (i.e., its "social web").

HOMEWORK: Gather evidence from the on-line historical records of the medieval Indian practices assigned for this unit (see schedule) that helps you evaluate the ways that the **practices appeared to strengthen or reinforce the social web of people engaged in them.**

- Identify **actions, objects, words, spaces/locales** and **roles & relationships** in each social web associated with the Indian sources – especially those that show **practices strengthen or reinforce the social web of participants.** ****MAKE SURE TO CITE PAGE #S FOR EACH EXAMPLE****
- Since you will eventually be asked to apply what you learned to activities A-C proposed above, **look for ways that the historical Indian practices are similar to those contemporary activities.**