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Free Muslim Science books to UK schools

By: Staff Correspondent

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An educational foundation has announced plans to distribute free books to UK schools to highlight the scientific and cultural legacy of Muslim civilisation. 1001 Inventions is the brainchild of the Foundation for Science Technology and Civilisation (FSTC) - a network of academics dedicated to debunking the myth of the so-called 'Dark Ages of Civilisation'.

Last month, atheism activist Richard Dawkins announced plans to distribute free DVDs to UK schools. Whilst FSTC does not consider it's 1001 Inventions campaign a direct challenge to Dawkins, it does hope to encourage debate about the relationship between science, faith and culture.

FSTC has campaigned for school curriculums to acknowledge the scientific achievements of Muslim civilisation for more than a decade. While the Dawkins campaign, supported by the British Humanist Association, positions science and religion as opposing forces, the 1001 Inventions project reminds us that for 1000 years the religious and the scientific were comfortable bedfellows and led to unprecedented openness to new ideas and social change.

The book that accompanies the project is entitled 1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World and highlights the thousand years of social, scientific and technical achievements that are currently under-recognised in schools' textbooks. The project aspires to deliver at least 3000 copies of the book to UK schools by October 2009, and is seeking public support for the campaign through a sponsorship scheme (as has Dawkins).

Professor Salim Al-Hassani, chief editor of the book, explained: "The period between the 7th and 17th centuries, that has been erroneously labeled 'The Dark Ages' was in fact a time of exceptional scientific and cultural advancement in China, India and the Arab world. This is the period in history that gave us the first manned flight, huge advances in engineering, the development of robotics and the foundations of modern mathematics, chemistry and physics.

"Whilst the Dawkins DVD teaches young people about 'the experimental scientific method', it fails to point out that it was pioneered by a religious physicist called Ibn-Al Haytham, who saw no conflict in being both a Muslim and a scientist. Our campaign is working to tell the story of the cultural origins of our present day science. A story that is often missing from our textbooks."

The 1001 Inventions campaign was launched by the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation (FSTC); a not-for-profit, non-religious and non-political body based in the UK but supported by academics from across the globe. The project has attracted the support of leading educators, scientists and politicians.


The book 1001 Inventions comes with a DVD, a poster set for classrooms, a free Teachers Pack and lesson plans. A nationwide campaign will be launched in September across the UK encouraging parents and teachers to provide children with a fair and accurate understanding of the debt modern society owes to other civilisations.

1001 Inventions is a non-religious and non-political project, with academic support and overview, which works to highlight the scientific and cultural roots of present day civilisation.

The contribution that Muslim and other civilisations have made to the modern world in which we live has been widely overlooked. The project believes that the history of scientific and technological progress demonstrates the shared heritage of humanity, which can help societies appreciate their shared cultural and technological inheritance.

Such appreciation can make a significant contribution to interfaith dialogue, societal harmony, community cohesion and cultural convergence.


Further information is available at www.1001inventions.com or by visiting www.MuslimHeritage.com, which are the world's leading online sources for Muslim heritage information.



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