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**Summary Statement**

This issue of Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue, provides articles and responses to a conference which had four main objectives: (1) to examine the present challenge of Islamophobia in America, with particular attention to how it relates to evangelicals and Muslims; (2) to provide a biblical, historical, legal, and political rationale for greater tolerance across religions; (3) to develop (and lay the foundation for) a long-term strategy for evangelicals and others to address Islamophobia in the United States; and (4) to develop tools for implementing that strategy.

**On the Cover:** Bharat Choudhary, The Silence of “Others” (see back cover for more on the artist).
Introduction Matthew J. Krabill and Cory B. Willson

Matthew is a PhD candidate in Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies. Cory is Jake and Betsy Tuls Assistant Professor of Missiology and Missional Ministry at Calvin Theological Seminary.

EVANGELICALS AND ISLAMOPHOBIA: Critical Voices and Constructive Proposals

As every day passes, we are subjected to new acts of horrific violence. The list of cities continues to grow: Dhaka, Grand Bassam, Orlando and Nice. Violence and extremism in the name of Islam are saturating the lion’s share of the global news. A conflation of issues, including the ongoing mass movement of people across borders, a resurgence of nationalist ideologies in western societies, the long-arc of western foreign policy and the rhetoric of political campaigns have created environments where Islamophobia is thriving.

Within a hyper-Islamized-American context, evangelicals have responded to Islam in a myriad of ways. On the one hand, some evangelicals have responded through expressions of fear and condemnation. This is a response which views Islam as terroristic, violent and a threat to “Western values.” This type of response tends to demonize Islam as a religion and Muslims as a people. Yet another reaction is confusion and paralysis. This is harder to concretely identify but anyone who has consistently interacted with evangelical Christians in pulpit and pew recognizes this sentiment is widespread (common?). As a result, many evangelicals have opted for a posture of silence. In this case, the most urgent and pressing questions among evangelicals remain dormant—relegated to conversations over dinner with friends or following a board meeting with like-minded people.

In October 2015, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), Peace Catalyst International (PCI), and the Dialogue Institute (DI) convened a conference at Temple University designed to help evangelicals and others understand the consequences of and develop thoughtful responses to Islamophobia in the United States. The conference had four main objectives: (1) to examine the present challenge of Islamophobia in America, with particular attention to how it relates to evangelicals and Muslims; (2) to provide a biblical, historical, legal, and political rationale for greater tolerance across religions; (3) to develop (and lay the foundation for) a long-term strategy for evangelicals and others to address Islamophobia in the United States; and (4) to develop tools for implementing that strategy.

This issue of the journal contains voices representing Christian, Muslim and Jewish traditions. In addition to the featured papers from the Temple Conference, we include global responses to the topic from evangelicals and Muslims representing cross-sections of their respective faiths.

Please note that each featured article is accompanied by an abstract. Other than Johnston’s introduction, each feature article continues online, accessible by the following link at the bottom of the page: www.fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia. This format is consistent with our continuing shift to a more significant online presence. Also located online are the full footnotes. Lastly, the English translation of the Louis Schweitzer article is available online.
Featured Article DOUGLAS JOHNSTON

Douglas Johnston is President and founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy.

COMBATING ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AMERICA

To address the mistreatment of Christian minorities in Muslim-majority countries and that of American Muslims in the United States, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) brought 19 Pakistani and American religious and civil society leaders together for a week in Nepal in January 2014, to establish an Interfaith Leadership Network (ILN). The purpose of this network was to build relationships between and among American and Pakistani interfaith leaders, and to design and pursue collaborative initiatives that would ease the plight of religious minorities in Pakistan, and counter the impact and spread of Islamophobia in the United States.

In October 2015, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), Peace Catalyst International (PCI), and the Dialogue Institute (DI) convened a conference at Temple University designed to help Evangelicals and others understand the consequences of and develop thoughtful responses to Islamophobia in the United States. The conference had four main objectives: (1) to examine the present challenge of Islamophobia in America, with particular attention to how it relates to Evangelicals and Muslims; (2) to provide a biblical, historical, legal, and political rationale for greater tolerance across religions; (3) to develop (and lay the foundation for) a long-term strategy for Evangelicals and others to address Islamophobia in the United States; and (4) to develop tools for implementing that strategy.

In this essay Douglas Johnston briefly describes the increase in Islamophobia in America and how it is being used to prey on people’s fears and anti-Muslim sentiment. Understanding the complexity of the Islamophobia phenomenon within its cultural, religious and political backdrop was critical to the shaping of the Temple Conference. Secondly, Johnston provides an overview of the insights provided by selected representatives from the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish traditions, who came together to address the various dimensions of Islamophobia, how they manifest themselves, and what can be done to counter them.

Toward this latter goal, ICRD engaged Peace Catalyst International (PCI) and the Dialogue Institute (DI) at Temple University as partners in convening a three-day conference to address Islamophobic sentiments within the conservative Evangelical community in America. The effort was underwritten by the William and Mary Greve Foundation and Halloran Philanthropies.

Background: the Rise of Islamophobia in America

The first clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America is fundamental to the effective functioning of our republic—“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” By Supreme Court interpretation, it has been applied to the individual states.

The Bill of Rights, which constitutes the first Ten Amendments to our Constitution, was ratified in 1791 and had been debated ever since it was first proposed in 1789. Today, it is under stress in a rather rare fashion, as significant religious figures argue that Islam has become inconsistent with American culture and law. This line of thinking is fanning the flames of what has come to be known as “Islamophobia,” a term which, when it was first introduced as a concept in 1991, was defined as an “unfounded hostility toward Muslims.” A significant number of Americans believe that Islam is so antithetical to our American way of life that they effectively dehumanize all practitioners of the Muslim faith as being irrational, intolerant, and violent.
The September 2001 attacks against the United States, which destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City and did enormous damage to the Pentagon, effectively triggered a campaign of fear-mongering against Muslims by influential commentators in the media and elsewhere. In reaction to this campaign and out of a recognition that the United States was unwittingly alienating the American Muslim community – perhaps its single greatest asset in combating Islamic extremists – ICRD co-sponsored a conference for U.S. government officials and American Muslim leaders in 2006 to address this problem. In partnership with the Institute for Islamic Thought and the Institute for Defense Analysis (the Pentagon’s leading think tank), ICRD convened 30 representatives from each side to determine how they could begin working together for the common good.

More specifically, the goals of the conference were first, to make the government aware of the legitimate grievances of its Muslim citizens and inspire the necessary action to address them. No one quite knows how large the American Muslim community really is, with estimates ranging from two to twelve million. What is known, though, is that American Muslims as a whole are well-educated, affluent, relatively young and politically active. Moreover, they have bought into the American dream. The second goal was to determine how the government could capitalize on the extensive paths of influence that American Muslims have with Muslim communities overseas and the last was to accommodate a Muslim perspective in the practice of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy.

The conference came up with a number of useful recommendations, and a second conference was convened a year later to monitor the progress toward implementation. As a result of this ongoing effort, the Muslim participants established a new organization called American Muslims for Constructive Engagement, which over a several year period joined ICRD in co-sponsoring a series of Policy Forums on Capitol Hill. The participants were key Congressional and Executive Branch staff involved in developing U.S. policies toward Muslim countries overseas, selected representatives from the American Muslim community, and relevant outside experts. The goal was to provide the Washington policy process with a more nuanced understanding of Islam; and from all indications, it helped to do exactly that. For the U.S. government’s part, the doors at the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security opened wider to the inputs of its Muslim citizens.

Despite the success of such efforts, the Islamophobia campaign continued unabated. In a July 2010 address to a politically conservative audience at The American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC, for example, former speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich warned that the Islamic practice of sharia constituted “a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it.” Such rhetoric can compromise the well-being of American Muslims and ultimately undermine their constitutional rights. Significant among those who have similar concerns are Evangelical pastors and their congregants who are often more negative than others in their pronouncements, hence the above conference at Temple University.

Contributing to the importance of such a conference was a study by a Washington-based think tank, the Center for American Progress (CAP), which put a spotlight on the problem in a 138-page report titled, “Fear, Inc.: Exposing the Islamophobia Network in America.” As the study shows, no fewer than seven conservative foundations collectively contributed over $42 million to exploit the fears and ignorance of Americans about Islam.

Recent trends suggest the effectiveness of this effort, with more Americans currently holding negative views of Islam than existed in the aftermath of 9-11. Also contributing to this trend is the fact that the media generally focuses on the violence committed by Islamic extremist groups rather than on the numerous Muslims who condemn this violence.

Douglas Johnston is President and founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy.
Temple Conference: Evangelicals, Islamophobia and Religious Freedom

The conference at Temple, which took place in October 2015, brought together some 30 prominent U.S. Evangelical leaders and selected representatives from the Muslim, Jewish, and non-Evangelical Christian traditions to address the various dimensions of Islamophobia, how they manifest themselves, and what can be done to counter them. The following articles authored by a number of the key participants capture the essence of these discussions, including a number of nuances that are commonly overlooked. What follows is a brief summary of the participants’ presentations and articles, all of which appear in this issue of the journal.

To provide a historical perspective, Howard Cohen, Adjunct Professor in Business Ethics at Temple University, explains how the nation’s founding documents protect its diverse religious practices and notes that it was the elevation of these protections into civil law that sets America apart. In this season when Islam is being scrutinized on the basis of extremist activities by ISIS and al-Qaeda, he said “we need to think scalpel, not meat cleaver. Our Constitution and Declaration of Independence require it. To refuse a more nuanced conversation about Islam in America rejects our unique values and the legal principles on which our nation was founded.”

With the above as backdrop, Imam Faisal Rauf, who chairs the Cordoba Initiative and who was previously identified with the Ground Zero Mosque, explained that the general hostility that many Muslims overseas feel toward America is almost solely a function of U.S. foreign policy and its heavy footprint in the Muslim world. Part and parcel of this footprint is the American support for authoritarian dictators that have prevailed for most of the last half century. The double standard of U.S. policy in the Middle East arising from its strategic relationship with Israel is also a factor. Finally, the collateral damage to Muslim civilians caused by U.S. military actions in fighting terrorism contributes to the hostility and ill-will as well.

Often unrecognized is the fact that Islamophobia has a far-reaching impact of its own that adversely affects American security and the safety and freedom of Christian minorities abroad. When Muslims in America are perceived to be mistreated, the situation for Christians living in Muslim-majority countries tends to deteriorate, as these Christians are often identified with the West, even if they have no direct connection.

Building on the above reality was a presentation by Dr. Elijah Brown, Chief of Staff of the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, who addressed the persecution that Christians often experience in Muslim-majority countries. Here, he distinguished between two categories of mistreatment, active persecution and structural discrimination. The former, he noted, is largely responsible for the fact that the Christian population in the Middle East has suffered a reduction from 15% of the total population in 1900 to less than five percent today.

More difficult to measure are the effects of structural discrimination, which are expressed in restrictive policies and practices, such as the misapplication of blasphemy laws in Muslim-majority countries (like Pakistan). One also finds examples of passive discrimination in national education systems, in which the existence and contributions of religious minorities are purposely excluded.

It is highly doubtful that the above consequences of Islamophobia are fully recognized by those who are contributing to its perpetuation. Exploring this aspect of the problem, Dr. David Belt, Chair of the Department of Regional Issues at the National Intelligence University, explains how proponents of Islamophobia have connected the external threat of Islamic extremism to an internal threat posed by Islamization, with the latter most often identified with a creeping institutionalization of Sharia Law that they claim will ultimately topple the United States. He also shows how the social conservatives who support this line of thinking have gone to great lengths in their cultural war with the progressives to link Islamophobia with the domestic Left.
For Evangelicals, there is an even more onerous correlation that is often drawn between Islam and the Anti-Christ, in which Mohammed is depicted as the false prophet of revelation. Further, their understanding of end times scripture leads to a strong pro-Israel bias to the point where they either “support Israel or be counted as God’s enemy.” As Dr. David Johnston, Visiting Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, goes on to explain, though, despite the seemingly irreconcilable doctrinal differences, Christianity and Islam share a number of common ideals that are good for society and suggests that this common ground is much wider than many might think, ranging from family values to peace to justice to serving the poor.

With the problem understood and its origins defined, the next question is what to do about it. Here Rick Love, President and founder of Peace Catalyst International, notes the double standard implicit in Christians who complain about the persecution of their brethren overseas, while turning a blind eye to the Islamophobia at home. As he puts it, “religious freedom for me, but not for thee.” He goes on to explain the Biblical mandate for religious freedom of choice, stemming from the concept of free will, the Golden Rule, and the admonition to love your neighbor. After explaining the benefits of religious liberty, he suggests that “religious liberty for all” should become a manifesto for Evangelicals.

Joseph Montville, Director of the Program on Healing Historical Memory at George Mason University, expands the scope for cooperation even further as he comments on the moral values that exist across all three Abrahamic faiths, e.g. the empathetic justice of Judaism, the spirit of forgiveness that constitutes the centerpiece of Christian identity, and the “natural religiousness” of Islamic faith. From there, he makes the case that because the core ethics of these faiths are essentially the same, i.e. liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice, members of each of these faiths should feel a common moral responsibility for all.

Catherine Osborn, Director of Shoulder to Shoulder, builds upon these themes by describing how her organization, facilitates inter-religious collaboration in combating anti-Muslim bigotry. She notes that the anti-Muslim rhetoric of Islamophobia tends to disregard the impact that it has on the American Muslim community. As she elegantly puts it, “we work for the rights and inclusion of Muslims in American society not in spite of our own faiths, but because of them.”

Finally, Rev. David McAllister-Wilson, President of Wesley Seminary, challenges Evangelicals to take the lead in Christian engagement with Islam. He suggests that they are the most able to understand the experience of being Muslim in America simply because other Christians speak as disparagingly about them as

**BOOK REVIEW**

Kidd, Thomas S. 2009

*American Christians and Islam: evangelical culture and Muslims from the colonial period to the age of terrorism.*


In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, many of America’s Christian evangelicals have denounced Islam as a “demonic” and inherently violent religion, provoking frustration among other Christian conservatives who wish to present a more appealing message to the world’s Muslims. Yet as Thomas Kidd reveals in this sobering book, the conflicted views expressed by today’s evangelicals have deep roots in American history.

Tracing Islam’s role in the popular imagination of American Christians from the colonial period to today, Kidd demonstrates that Protestant evangelicals have viewed Islam as a global threat—while also actively seeking to convert Muslims to the Christian faith—since the nation’s founding. He shows how accounts of “Mahometan” despotism and lurid stories of European enslavement by Barbary pirates fueled early evangelicals’ fears concerning Islam, and describes the growing conservatism of American missions to Muslim lands up through the post-World War II era. Kidd exposes American Christians’ anxieties about an internal Islamic threat from groups like the Nation of Islam in the 1960s and America’s immigrant Muslim population today, and he demonstrates why Islam has become central to evangelical “end-times” narratives. Pointing to many evangelicals’ unwillingness to acknowledge Islam’s theological commonalities with Christianity and their continued portrayal of Islam as an “evil” and false religion, Kidd explains why Christians themselves are ironically to blame for the failure of evangelism in the Muslim world.

*American Christians and Islam* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the causes of the mounting tensions between Christians and Muslims today.
they do about Muslims. Further, Evangelicals and devout Muslims are likely to be politically allied on a range of conservative social issues.

Rev. McAllister-Wilson also notes that there is a natural desire for harmony and unity at the outset of inter-faith engagements, in which differences are often glossed over, but suggests that a richer and perhaps more meaningful approach would involve moving to a next phase that sounds “like the development of jazz in America, with its dynamic balance arising from dissonance and syncopation, creating surprising moments of harmony, and that resolve in a vibrant interfaith village.”

Majid Alsayegh, Chairman of the Dialogue Institute and a Muslim American born in Mosul, Iraq, closed the conference with a prayer in Arabic and English after first making an important point, i.e. that the American Muslim community is making a concerted effort to promote mutual respect between Christians and Muslims by stressing to its members the need to internalize America’s principles of religious freedom and equality for all and by being the first to condemn any violence done in the name of Islam.

Conclusion

The Japanese internment camps during WWII provide a stark reminder of how fear often drives us in directions we later come to regret. If we are not careful, current attitudes in some circles toward American Muslims could drive us in that same direction.

As we have seen from the foregoing presentations, the factors is the concern for persecuted Christians in Muslim countries, an aversion to the brutal excess of ISIS and other Jihadist groups, and the provocative role played by social conservatives in fanning the flames of confrontation. It is important, however, to distinguish between American Muslims and the Islamic extremists overseas. From a strategic point of view, American Muslims constitute one of our more formidable assets in the global war against militant Islam. Not only have they been instrumental in uncovering a significant number of al-Qaeda plots against the United States, but they also enjoy extensive influence with Muslim communities overseas – many in places of strategic consequence to the United States – that could be usefully engaged to good advantage.

Every bit as important as the above is the fact that American Muslims represent a beacon of hope to countless Muslims around the world, who are not disposed toward violence. They are mindful that American Muslims enjoy greater freedom of thought than Muslims elsewhere and that they actively bridge modernity and the contemporary practice of Islam on a daily basis, a feat that remains a puzzle for most other practitioners of the faith.

Ever since the fateful attacks of 9-11, one has heard the seemingly endless refrain of “Where are the moderates? Why don’t they speak out?” In some cases, the perceived silence is driven by fear – directly on the part of those living in areas that are actively under attack and indirectly on the part of those living elsewhere, but who have relatives in those same areas who could be vulnerable to retribution from the extremists. A competing reason for the silence, though, is the fact that when mainstream Muslims speak out, as many of them do, it is not deemed sufficiently newsworthy to warrant coverage in the media. Thus, the fact that more than a

Hate crimes against American Muslims have soared to their highest levels since the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks.
thousand American imams have issued fatwas condemning terrorism goes all-but-totally unnoticed, except when the community pays to advertise the fact in newspapers or other media outlets.

An even more telling reality, however, is the fact that the so-called moderates (or mainstream Muslims), have little, if any, traction with the extremists. Rather it is the conservative, non-violent Muslims who do and who should command most of our attention.

This still leaves one with the question of what should be done about Islamophobia? Perhaps the best clue is offered by Pew research polls, which show twice as favorable an attitude toward Islam on the part of those who actually know a Muslim than among those who do not. This, in turn, raises the further question of how to facilitate greater interaction between American Muslims and other U.S. citizens?

For Christians or Jews one option is to ask your pastor, priest, or rabbi to seek out the imam of the nearest mosque and begin a personal relationship. If that proves successful, then the next logical step is for the church or temple and mosque to sponsor a mixed social function for their respective congregations. Assuming that goes well, then the final step often takes the form of the pastor or rabbi preaching a sermon in the mosque and the imam doing the same in the church or synagogue. By the same token, Muslims should also encourage their imams to reach out, rather than waiting for others to take the first step.

The different ways in which we can come together as fellow citizens is limited solely by our imaginations. The time has come for us to step up to the plate and start imagining!

Dr. Douglas Johnston is President and founder of the International Center for Religion & Diplomacy. Prior to that he was Executive Vice President and COO of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He was also the founding director of Harvard University’s Executive Program in National and International Security. Among his publications are Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft (Oxford, 1994) and his recent award-winning book, Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement (Praeger, 2011).

BOOK REVIEW

Evelyne A. Reisacher, 2016

Joyful Witness In the Muslim World: Sharing the Gospel in Everyday Encounters.

Mission in Global Community series:
Scott W. Sunquist and Amos Yong, ed.

Joyful Witness in the Muslim World features global perspectives on current Christian engagement with Islam. It equips readers for mission among Muslims, exploring how to move from fear to joy in sharing the gospel. After emphasizing the importance of joy in the biblical narrative on mission and in human relationship building, Evelyne Reisacher surveys areas where Muslims and Christians encounter one another in the twenty-first century, highlighting innovative models of Christian witness in everyday life. Drawing on insights from global Christianity, this survey takes account of diverse conceptions of Muslim-Christian relations. It may surprise those who believe mission among Muslims is nearly impossible.

Reisacher, who has decades of experience in engagement with Muslims, has noticed a certain dehumanization of Muslims by Christians. Muslims are seen as targets of mission instead of being accepted as human beings with whom we interact in everyday life. Walls have been erected between Muslims and Christians by social and political conflicts, and theological debates give the impression that Christians always meet with Muslims in extraordinary contexts. However, in today’s global village, Muslims and Christians are likely to meet each other anywhere and everywhere. Reisacher demonstrates that suffering and joy in mission are not in contradiction. Joy can be a catalyst to relationship and witness in a world threatened by conflicts involving Christians and Muslims.

This volume will help enhance global and local mission among Muslims. It will be of use to professors and students in mission courses, to mission training institutions and organizations, and to mission-minded pastors and mission committees in local churches.
Featured Article IMAM FEISAL ABDUL RAUF

I appreciate the invitation to this important gathering of Evangelical and Muslim leaders who are committed to combatting human hatred and Islamophobia in particular.

In the name of the one God that we both—Christians and Muslims—worship, recognize, and submit to, we beseech God to bless and guide us and to inspire us with God’s wisdom, compassion, love, mercy, and the ability to overcome the satanic or demonic forces that have created so many problems both within and between our faith communities.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE UNITED STATES AND THE ROOT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AMERICA

To begin, I first say that, unless we understand a problem and fully fathom it, there is no way we can solve it. One of the most important lessons I have learned came from a teacher who said, “Understanding a problem is 90 percent of solving it.” Part of the problem that I believe has happened in this country, certainly before 9/11 and in its immediate aftermath, is that many of the people who are responsible for shaping American policy did not fully understand the problem that they were dealing with. This is particularly an issue for numerous members of our leadership, including many members of Congress, which has been most frustrating to me and others who are trying to help the situation.

As we all know, the prime reason for hostility in much of the Muslim world toward America has nothing to do with American values or American business—much of which is very popular throughout the Muslim world and in the majority of Muslim countries. The hostility is completely due to the very heavy footprint of American foreign policy, including its military power that the United States has in various parts of the Muslim world.

I often like to make the analogy between how the U.S. dealt with Iran and how it treated the Philippines, because the situations are identical. In Iran we had the Shah who was “America’s guy” in that country. In the Philippines we had Ferdinand Marcos as America’s guy there. After many years, both of these populations wanted a regime change, which is something we Americans have the option of deciding on every four years. Peaceful regime change in the U.S. is built-in after a maximum of two presidential terms, because Americans realize they do not want any president to accumulate too much power. However, in projecting our foreign policy, we are often insensitive to the desire of other populations to have these same options.

Both the Iranian and Filipino populations did not want their leaders any more, and in both cases the religious community and leadership were actively involved in championing a regime change. While it is more popularly known that the Iranian religious leaders, such as Khomeini, were actively involved against the Shah, it is less well known that in the Philippines

ABSTRACT:
Imam Faisal Rauf explains that the general hostility that many Muslims overseas feel toward America is almost solely a function of U.S. foreign policy and its heavy footprint in the Muslim world. Part and parcel of this footprint is the American support for authoritarian dictators that have prevailed for most of the last half century. The double standard of U.S. policy in the Middle East arising from its strategic relationship with Israel is also a factor. Finally, the collateral damage to Muslim civilians caused by U.S. military actions in fighting terrorism contributes to the hostility and ill-will as well.
the Catholic Archbishop was also very much involved in getting Marcos removed. He lobbied the Vatican to help persuade U.S. leadership—at that time the Reagan administration—to effect a peaceful transfer of government, thereby helping Corazon Aquino come into power, supported by the military leader General Fidel V. Ramos. Right after that, the Philippine government effectively said to the Americans, “Thank you very much. Now, we are not happy with your military base in Subic Bay. We do not like what your soldiers are doing to our young ladies and to the morality of our people, so please remove your base from there.” The U.S. obliged.

The same sentiments expressed by Muslims have generally been met with a very different treatment. This uneven engagement describes the basic reason why much of the Muslim world has this animosity toward the U.S., which has supported strongmen regimes that have ruled in an authoritarian manner over their populations. American military bases in Bahrain, in Qatar, and in the UAE, has contributed to the sense that the U.S. government, in projecting its policies toward the Muslim world, has not been as sensitive to the needs of the average person living there. Even today, Muslims who would like to see American political values implemented in their own countries do not see a systematic, coherent, effective way of getting traction toward achieving that.

Instead, they see U.S. drones killing innocent Muslims or what we call “collateral damage.” It does not take much to create dangerous feelings of hatred. In the film Fahrenheit 451, there is a scene in which one of our bombs destroys a person’s home, and the wife survives, but the husband does not. There is a scene in which she looks into the camera (and if you understand Arabic, it is very powerful). She says, “What did my husband do to you that you killed him? You destroyed my life!” The powerful emotion conveyed in that scene made me think to myself: if I was her fifteen year old nephew, what would be the first thing on my mind? Probably revenge.

This is how we contribute to the cultivation of an emotion in a young teenager or man, who in a moment like that might say, “You know what, if I die in the process of just getting revenge for my uncle, I’ll be happy.” There are too many moments—let us call them “collaterally caused” moments—that are a collateral part of our foreign policy that has contributed to this most unfortunate negative sentiment in many countries in the Muslim world; this sentiment is sufficient to motivate that “fraction of a fraction” of a percent of the approximately 1.5 billion Muslims in the world to commit acts of revenge.

(For the rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf is the Chairman of The Cordoba Initiative. He is the author of several books on Islam including most recently Defining Islamic Statehood: Measuring and Indexing Contemporary Muslim States. Imam Feisal has been ranked among the “100 Most Influential People in the World” by TIME Magazine, “Top 100 Global Thinkers” by Foreign Policy, and “Top 50 Arabs” by Middle East magazine.
AMERICA’S UNIQUE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND THE FIT OF ISLAM

The impetus for this conference came about because there are serious and dangerous issues in our traditional American religious communities that are not receiving adequate intellectual attention and discussion. The issues have many components, as almost all religious issues do, and our nonstop news cycle and social media have had an adverse effect on reflective, informed, sober discussion. The subject is sometimes called “Islamophobia,” which means, “a strong fear or dislike” of Islam. In fact, if you were to go to almost any thesaurus, you will find synonyms including “terror, horror, dread, paranoia,” and “anxiety.”

These are incredibly strong words, and their current usage in the United States has been magnified by the lack of knowledge and education about Islam and its traditions, particularly in the way it is portrayed to us and our fellow Americans in the media. We cannot hide the fact that there are 1.57 billion global adherents to Islam, slightly more than 23 percent of the world’s population. According to the Pew Research Center this year there are 50 Muslim-majority countries.

The simple fact for Americans is that our nation has been, is, and will continue to be deeply involved in the Middle East and the Levant, a troubled part of the world where Islam is being exploited by fanatics who are trying to relive historic wars and by those charged with religious leadership of Islam—the ayatollahs. Many of these religious and political leaders have positions similar to, but more pervasive in their impact, than rabbis in the Jewish religion, and pastors, preachers and priests in Christianity. This is difficult for many Americans to comprehend because Islam, in its most orthodox form as set forth in the Quran, is an all encompassing way-of-life. An essential fact is that its fundamentalist adherents practice Islam in its strictest form as they interpret it and follow its teachings without regard to modernity.

Bernard Lewis, a highly respected scholar of Islam, notes that the separation of church and state is a Western phenomenon, not often accepted by Muslims. Lewis concludes, “In the Islamic context, the independence and initiative of the civil society may best be measured not in relation to the state, but in relation to religion, of which, in the Muslim perception, the state itself is a manifestation and an instrument.”

To rationally discuss what some consider an irrational notion—call it faith, religion, or belief—is especially difficult, and the role of religion in various societies, including our own, is why this conference is important. It is especially important when we look at these and related issues about religion and the law in the context of the special, unique place we call the United States of America.
This amazing place for which we often use shorthand, “America,” is perhaps the one major nation on earth that was founded by our forefathers to provide a refuge from religious intolerance. Practitioners of a religion who could not follow their convictions where they lived founded Our America. Our religious history goes back to 1620 when 102 individuals landed at Plymouth Rock in what is today Massachusetts.7

There is, as my colleague Doug Johnston noted in his book, Religion, Terror and Error, a parallel to today’s Muslims and yesterday’s Pilgrims:

It could be said that the first American colonies in New England were founded by the Christian equivalent of Salafis (Muslims who seek to live their lives according to the literal teaching of Islam as manifested in the behavior of the Prophet): in other words, Christian believers who sought to live a life as close to the apostolic example of the followers of Jesus as humanly possible, guided only by Holy Scripture, to create “a shining city on a hill” bound not by regulations and laws but by “love in the heart.” Just as for Muslims today, John Winthrop drew no distinction between Church and State.8

This analogy highlights that America’s religious history is complex and ever changing. Recently, and unfortunately, the media, politicians and many others, including some from Christian pulpits, have painted Muslims with the broad brush of intolerance.9

Trained as a lawyer, I often find it necessary and helpful to look to history and to the documents of any argument, especially when they are important to our understanding of issues.

In these situations and in these difficult moments in our history, we have fanatics, Radical Islamists, who are heavily armed and are recruiting misguided individuals to lives that require significant psychiatric care. We have dedicated, fanatic individuals using today’s most modern technologies to highjack one of the three Abrahamic faiths for actions and behaviors inconsistent with any civilized purpose.

As rational, educated believers in a single God we must dedicate ourselves to understanding this phenomenon and to dealing with it without falling into any of the many traps that our adversaries may be setting for us. And make no mistake, those of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and similar enterprises are now America’s adversaries. But we also must remember that these fanatic Muslim Radicals are a minority of the followers of Islam. In percentage terms, few Muslims follow these fanatics and certainly only a very tiny percentage of Muslims are our adversaries. This is one of the essential facts that we need to incorporate into our thinking and into our behavior.

Others writing for this special edition of the Journal know far more than I about their individual faiths and religions, but a short legal and historic contextual framework for our efforts as we confront a dangerous world and the growing phenomenon, Islamophobia, may be helpful.

I do this only after having immersed myself in a short quest to understand the fundamental tenets of one of my first questions: “What is an Evangelical?” To place Evangelicals and Islam in the context of the Constitution of the United States and our unique political system requires an undistorted understanding of both.

In this effort I want to acknowledge the guidance given me by Dr. Rick Love, a colleague along with Dr. Douglas Johnston in putting together this Conference. I thank them for their help especially since my own Judaism did not give me much experience with Evangelicals. For instance, Evangelicals have an obligation to share their faiths and proselytize for new adherents and Judaism does not. However, the dramatic changes in American Judaism during the last 75 years does help with respect to Islam because there are very significant adjustments that are required when one lives in a society where one’s religion is the majority religion and where it is a minority religion. Jews have had considerable practice as a minority in many Diaspora communities.10

Rick sent me to a few texts, one of which is Leon Morris’s “What Do We Mean By Evangelical?” And relying on readings of the New Testament I now have a better understanding of the deep and abiding faith of an Evangelical, their relationships to the “gospel,” and the centrality of their belief to everyday life and to the persuasiveness of Christ to their thinking. Indeed, the core of an Evangelical begins with Christ’s death for our sins, his burial, and his rising up on the third day.

Resurrection is a beautiful concept and while scholars have debated it, as they debate almost everything, the essence of it is mentioned in old Jewish writings:

“...let your dead revive! Let corpses arise! Awake and shout for joy, You who dwell in the dust!—For your dew is like the dew on fresh growth; You make the land of the shades come to life. (Isaiah 26:19).”11

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

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HOW U.S. SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES CREATED POLITICAL UTILITY IN ISLAM FEARMONGERING

Since the early aftermath of 9/11, popular discourse about Islam by social conservative elite and institutions has been marred by a more vocal segment that conflates Islam with terrorism, erasing all distinction, in what was a distinctly politically incorrect security narrative to the more progressive and prevailing “Islam is peace” frame. One such organization with its roots largely among Evangelicals that advanced this counternarrative was ACT! for America. At one point larger than even the American Israel Political Affairs Committee, the organization’s founder, Brigitte Gabriel, was a naturalized U.S. Evangelical with Lebanese Maronite roots, who had been affiliated with Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN).

Speaking at the unofficial Intelligence Summit in Washington, DC, on February 19, 2006, Gabriel said, “America and the West are doomed to failure in this war unless they stand up and identify the real enemy, Islam,” and elsewhere characterized “Every practicing Muslim,” as “a radical Muslim.”

In the area of religious fiction, popular conservative Christian novelists joined this fearmongering. Joel Richardson found a sustained niche audience in the genre of Christian apocalypticism that helped him attain bestselling status with books such as Antichrist: Islam’s Awaited Messiah (Wine Press Publishing, 2006), The Islamic Antichrist: The Shocking Truth About the Nature of the Beast (WND Books, 2009), and—in case you missed the first two—the Mideast Beast: The Case for an Islamic Antichrist (WND Books, 2012).

In the latter part of the post-9/11 decade, this kind of U.S. social conservative security discourse that constructed Islam and its adherents as a threat degenerated into more conspiratorial and paranoid threat narrative. Under this new element of the Green Scare, the threat was no longer an external one, Islam, but an internal one, Islamization. Specifically, the U.S. was now in danger of being toppled by the institutionalization of Islamic law, or sharia, which gradually and stealthily was being imposed upon the nation’s 307 million mostly Christian and secular citizens against their collective will by a virtually invisible population of Muslim-Americans.

ABSTRACT:
In the aftermath of 9/11, a prominent segment of U.S. religious and social conservatives more broadly helped construct a popular national discourse or societal master narrative that classified not just al-Qaeda but the entire religion of Islam as a security threat. Later in the post-9/11 decade, social conservatives shifted the threat axis related to Islam inward. According to this scare-narrative the threat to the nation was not so much from violent extremists outside the nation’s borders, but from a more surreptitious nonviolent plan of Islamization by Muslim-Americans, to topple the U.S. Constitution with sharia, or Islamic law. This scare—what we might call the “Green Scare,” following the historical-colored convention of the Red Scare and Yellow Peril over perceived threats from the East—largely subsided after conservatives failed to win back the White House in 2012.

Why did this scare over the Islamization of America emerge? This paper introduces both the nature and agents of this popular security discourse. Deepening the prevailing characterization of this Green Scare as “Islamophobia,” it reveals the political utility of such fearmongering. Specifically, it examines how well-known social-conservative culture warriors—both individual elite and institutions—opportunistically seized the topic of Islam as yet another platform upon which to advance their ongoing struggle against their domestic political rivals, the Democrats and the Left more broadly.
The contours of this scare are familiar to any well-read religious or social conservative; it was typified by Conservative U.S. culture warrior David Horowitz’s April 2, 2007 e-mail to his blog’s subscribers, in which he fantastically warned of “the purposeful and systematic dismantling of all aspects of our culture” via the imposition of “Sharia law on the U.S., replacing our law with provisions such as the stoning of adulterous women and cutting off thieves’ hands.”

Of Jewish descent, Horowitz was joined by other Jewish intellectuals known for their advocacy of Israel’s Zionism-aligned occupation and control of Palestine. Dr. Daniel Pipes, of the Middle East Forum, for instance, in 2009 wrote “Islamism 2.0,” portraying moderate European Muslims and even Muslim-Americans as a fifth column. Nonviolent Western Muslims, Pipes said, “threaten civilized life” even more than such violent ones as Osama bin Laden, as they gradually “move the country toward Shari’a.” In Pipes’s assessment, the nation’s destruction by its tiny population of half-black, half-immigrant adult Muslims supposedly already had begun, surreptitiously, in a form of lawful Islamism by Muslims groups that would prefer direct violence but must settle for a gradual culture war.

The Green Scare’s Domestic Political Utility

It never fails that any topic of societal importance will eventually become politicized—that is, seized upon by one or more political factions as a platform for politics, or as yet another topic field of opportunity to continue their ongoing cultural struggle against their domestic rivals. And, in the case of the Green Scare, three peculiar features of this popular security discourse suggest that social conservatives had indeed found Islam useful, as yet another opportune platform to carry on their ongoing domestic culture war with the Left broadly.

The Green Scare’s Exclusive Political Place

As the decade wore on, it became clear that it was only elements of the Right who were supportive of the contentious Islam(ization) threat discourse. By this juncture, one’s position on the Islam(ization) threat narrative became a recognized identifier as to which U.S. political party one was affiliated with, reflected by Politico’s headline, “GOP Litmus Test: Sharia Opposition.” Observing this solidarity if not strategy, Sheila Musaji—editor of The American Muslim—wrote that “The GOP has declared war on American Muslims.”

GOP solidarity on the topic was typified by Republican presidential frontrunner Herman Cain, who in a March 21, 2011 interview with Christianity Today advanced the politically-incorrect or counternarrative on Islam. “Based upon the little knowledge that I have of the Muslim religion,” Cain said, “they have an objective to convert all infidels or kill them.” Christianity Today’s interviewer seemed to agree, tacitly affirming Cain’s characterization if Islam, replying only, “Is there anything else you’d like to say?” In another instance, Cain also described the subversive “attempt to gradually ease sharia law and the Muslim faith into our government.”

Among members of the U.S. Congress, it was similarly only Conservatives who propagated the counternarrative and related sharia conspiracy. When Peter King (R, NY) chaired House Homeland Security Committee hearings in 2011 on Muslim-American radicalization, for instance, it was only the Democrats who were united in their criticism of the hearings and only Republicans defending them. Similarly, it was only Republicans in the group led by Michele Bachmann (R, MN) who wrote letters to government offices alleging that “Muslim Brotherhood operatives” had “penetrated” the U.S. government and even Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s staff. And, it was only religious conservatives in the House Capitol Ministries who had either made anti-Muslim statements, supported the Islam(ization) of America conspiracy theory, or supported anti-Muslim groups.

The counternarrative on Islam(ization) also enjoyed significant solidarity among religious conservative elite. Typifying this solidarity for the counternarrative among religious conservatives was the Oak Initiative—a coalition of evangelical and Pentecostal clergy founded to be “salt and light” in the time of America’s crisis and “the greatest threat to its continued existence.” In 2010, the Oak Initiative produced a video featuring former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, General “Jerry” Boykin. “Those following the dictates of the Quran,” said Boykin, “are under an obligation to destroy our Constitution and replace it with sharia law.” General Boykin—a symbol of a contemporary Christian soldier—was in high demand in the latter part of the post-9/11 decade among some evangelical elite for his politically incorrect speech regarding Islam.

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

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MINORITY REPORT:  
Christian Persecution in Muslim-Majority Countries

Testifying before the United States House Foreign Affairs Committee in May 2015, Sister Diana Momeka of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Sienna, Mosul, Iraq, said the following:

There are many who say, ‘Why don’t the Christians just leave Iraq and move to another country and be done with it?’ To this question we would respond, ‘Why should we leave our country – what have we done?’

The Christians of Iraq are the first people of the land. You read about us in the Old Testament of the Bible. Christianity came to Iraq from the very earliest days through the preaching and witness of St. Thomas and others of the Apostles and Church Elders.

While our ancestors experienced all kinds of persecution, they stayed in their land, building a culture that has served humanity for the ages. We, as Christians, do not want or deserve to leave or be forced out of our country any more than you would want to leave or be forced out of yours. But the current persecution our community is facing is the most brutal in our history.1

The sentiment expressed by Sister Diana represents the sentiments of many Christians living in Muslim majority countries who are proud of their nationality and strive to work for the common good but nonetheless face challenging circumstances.

To help clarify the reality of the situation facing Christians in Muslim majority countries, a few statistics are particularly noteworthy:2

- There are forty-four Muslim majority countries in the world stretching from North Africa through the Middle East and into Asia with a combined Muslim population over 1.1 billion.
- With approximately 1.6 billion total adherents to Islam in the world, 72% of the world’s Muslims live in a country where they are the majority.
- While in Lebanon, Muslims comprise 61% of the total population and in Malaysia are 64%, these are the exceptions. The average adherence to Islam in a Muslim majority country is 90.4%.
- In thirty-eight of the forty-four Muslim majority countries, or in 86%, Christianity is the largest religious minority.3

Altogether there are 56 million Christians living in Muslim majority countries, which equates to about 2.6% of the total, global Christian population. Strengthening these Christian communities is vitally important from a community development standpoint. Moreover, these communities offer perhaps the most strategic opportunity for multi-faith engagement and the fostering of plural civil societies.4 Though overly simplistic, four broad categories help describe the
precarious situation facing many Christians living in Muslim majority countries: active persecution, structural discrimination, public passivity and interpersonal relationships.

**Active Persecution**

The most limited but most severe form of repression of Christians in Muslim majority countries is active persecution, and in particular active persecution perpetrated by the governments themselves or non-state actors functioning as governments. This is most clearly evidenced in the actions of the Islamic State (IS) against religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.

In the summer of 2014 the armies of the IS advanced on the Nineveh Plains forcing a modern day exodus as tens of thousands of families fled the genocidal intent of the impending forces. This included a small group of Catholic nuns who had to flee overnight from the village of Qaraqosh. As the sisters inched their way down a crowded road in a small van late into the night, people walking alongside pounded on the vehicle and begged the nuns to take their young children in order to ensure their rescue. They took as an act of peace in the midst of violence all they could until they ran out of room.

The Islamic State’s desecration and destruction of historic sites of religious and cultural heritage is unprecedented in Iraq. In Mosul, IS has turned an 800-year-old house of worship into a place of torture. Churches in Mosul are also utilized as a prison and as a weapons storehouse. Religious minorities in Iraq are living on the edge of extinction.

To give just one example of how families have been impacted by this reality, after the Islamic State seized Mosul, one Christian husband attempted to take his wife of twenty-eight years to Mosul so she could continue receiving treatment for breast cancer. When they arrived at the hospital, an IS guard refused entrance because they were Christian. They were told that medical treatment was contingent upon conversion to Islam. The wife responded, “I am not going to leave the cross of Christ. I will not abandon it. For me, a love of life is not as important as the faith.” The couple—a construction worker and his wife—returned to their small village about sixteen miles away. Ten days later, she passed away with her husband and nineteen year old and eight year old sons at her bedside. According to the husband, her last words were, “I am going to hold onto the cross of Christ. I refuse to convert. I prefer death. I prefer death to abandoning my religion and my faith.” When she passed away she was forty-five.

While precise numbers are difficult to ascertain, in the last decade the Christian community in Iraq has plummeted from approximately 1.5 million to under 300,000 and half of those are displaced. The actions being pursued by the Islamic State against religious minorities in Iraq constitute genocide and crimes against humanity. Although numerous political actors have been resistant to utilizing this term, a growing number of individuals have begun deploying this term as the most accurate descriptor for the actions unfolding in Iraq such as Pope Francis, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCRIF) Chairman Robert George, Former Governor of Maryland and current 2016 U.S. Presidential candidate Martin O’Malley, and International Center for Religion and Diplomacy President Douglas Johnston. Genocide and crimes against humanity not only negatively impacts Christians, but there is also real persecution of Yazidis, Turkomen, Shabbaq, Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims. In this particular situation, Yazidis may be the religious minority most gruesomely impacted. According to some of the latest statistics provided by the Yezidi Affairs Directorate, 5,838 Yezidis have been kidnapped, 18 Yezidi Temples exploded, 12 Yezidi massacres have occurred on Sinjar Mountain and 3,758 Yezidis remain in the captivity of the Islamic State.

Though multiple religious communities are negatively impacted by the actions of the Islamic State, in terms of numerical size the Christian community is the most significantly affected religious minority community. One recent report claims that after 2,000 years of continual existence, Christianity could be almost completely eradicated from large swaths of the Middle East in the next five years. Though this may be hyperbole, the fact that this report was validated by United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron highlights the challenges facing many Christians. While other examples are available, the actions of the IS are the clearest contemporary instance of active persecution perpetrated by the State, or in this case the effective State, against Christians. As confirmed by a 2015 report by the U.S. State Department Office on International Religious Freedom, the most pressing challenge to religious freedom today is the actions of non-state actors. This reality of active persecution cannot be ignored but nor should it be over-emphasized as it is the narrowest in terms of scope.

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

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Colonial Americans had no idea that many of the slaves on their shores were actually Muslims. The famous Boston pastor Cotton Mather once quipped, “we are afar off, in a Land, which never had (that ever heard of) one Mahometan breathing in it.” Yet they felt themselves to be knowledgeable about Islam through the proliferation of sermons and books on that topic. The other source was the reality of Americans, along with Europeans, who were enslaved by the “Barbary Pirates” of North Africa. Already in the 1670s, several stories of North American captives caught the attention of the colonists, but especially that of the appointed royal governor of Carolina, who was abducted in 1679 and later freed by ransom. His narrative has only survived in fragments, but what stands out is “the cruelties of the Muslims” and the power of his prayers, which also influenced his captors.

Captivity stories from North Africa were so common that many beggars on the streets of colonial America claimed to have been captured by the Barbary pirates, hoping to elicit more sympathy. Yet these stories also fueled a longstanding industry within Christendom including polemical writings about Muslims and Islam. One particularly influential book, Humphrey Prideaux’s, The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet, was published in London in 1697, with seven subsequent editions. Years later, American editions appeared in Philadelphia (1796) and Fairhaven, Vermont (1798), no doubt connected to the nascent U.S. government’s troubles with the Barbary powers at that time.

We know that Prideaux’s book was widely read in the American colonies, because from the early 18th century on, and for the first time, Muhammad’s name in print rarely appeared without the epithet “impostor.” Prideaux’s message was hardly new, but this Anglican theologian’s main target was the Deists, whose central critique of Christianity was that it was fraudulent. By holding up Islam as a plain case of religious forgery, he hoped to defend Christianity’s integrity. From the start he anticipates accusations of demonizing Islam, but he promises to “approach Islam judiciously.” That said, he had little first hand knowledge, and what he did think he knew was often wrong—but wrote he did, and people on both sides of the Atlantic absorbed it as truth.
Muhammad’s religion, he argued, was a fig leaf over his ambition to control the Arabian Peninsula and vast territories beyond. This new religion was a, “Medley made up of Judaism, the several Heresies of the Christians and then in the East, and the old Pagan Rites of the Arabs, with an indulgence to all Sensual Delights.” Not by coincidence, he noted, Muhammad claimed divine revelation through the angel Gabriel at the time when the Bishop of Rome claimed supremacy over the whole church. This was a common association in colonial America and into the nineteenth century—that is the Roman Church and Islam as the dual Antichrist. As for the specifically Islamic forgery, Prideaux set out its characteristics as illustrative of any other false religion in another book of the same period, A Discourse for the Vindicating of Christianity:7 An impostor religion would always (1) serve some “carnal interests,” (2) be led by wicked men, (3) have “Falsities” at the very heart of the religion, (4) use “craft and fraud” to accomplish its ends, (5) be backed by conspirators who would eventually be revealed, and (6) be spread by force. Eighteenth-century Anglo-Americans widely attributed all these characteristics to Islam.8

In fact, these are all old Christian polemical tropes on Islam, but they were made more attractive and spread more willingly because of contemporary stories of American and European enslavement by the North African corsairs. Still, this polemic was not all about religion. The colonists who promoted the ideals of revolution against Britain often used Islamic states as a foil for mounting their attacks. Benjamin Franklin’s character Poor Richard, for instance, asks at one point, “is it worse to follow Mahomet than the devil?” His readers automatically assumed that both were just as bad. During this period, as Kidd notes, “Anglo-Americans typically used categories from Islam as rhetorical tools to discredit opponents, or as players in eschatological speculation.” Additionally, within the social ferment of pre-revolutionary America, “polemics often used Islam and its states as the world’s worst examples of tyranny and oppression, the very traits that the revolutionaries meant to fight.”9 For example, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon immensely popular Cato’s Letters (1723) highlighted the curbing of the press and muzzling of public speech as routinely practiced by Islamic states.

Naturally, feelings only intensified when the new American republic’s ships faced attacks in the Mediterranean, making it feel both vulnerable and rather impotent militarily. Algerian ships commandeered two ships in 1785 and eleven more in 1793. American diplomats, meanwhile, were showing their inexperience, and an agreement signed in 1796 to free eighty-eight American sailors cost the new government one million dollars, over fifteen percent of its annual budget. The ruler of Tripoli declared war on the U.S. in 1801 and President Thomas Jefferson announced a blockade against it. But as fate would have it, the U.S. frigate Philadelphia was captured two years later by the Tripolitans, who thus enslaved three hundred more Americans. The Americans managed to free them a couple of years later at minimal cost, but then in 1815 a new war broke out with the State of Algiers. President James Madison, this time in command of a more formidable navy, managed to force all of the North African states to give up all piracy against American ships. American military power had now come of age, but only after several decades of anxiety about the Muslim corsairs of the Mediterranean.

Two centuries later, Americans were attacked, not by pirates who also happened to be Muslims, but by Muslims who believed that running planes into buildings was their God-given mandate. Islamic terrorism, which had so far killed mostly Muslims, now had killed Americans on their own soil. With all the backlog of anti-Islamic rhetoric swirling around in American discourse, it is not difficult to guess that the new political reality was only going to make it more intense and more strident. On the one side, a president who personally identified with conservative Protestants but who also took his leadership role seriously, George W. Bush, repeated over and over that the “War on Terror” was a war against Muslim extremists who choose to use violence to further their agenda, and not against Islam or Muslims. Mainline Protestants and some evangelicals, along with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops all praised the president’s approach, though not his 2003 war on Iraq.

On the other side, evangelical leaders like Pat Robertson opined that these people are worse than the Nazis: “Adolf Hitler was bad, but what the Muslims want is to do to the Jews is worse.” Evangelist Billy Graham’s son, Franklin Graham, quipped that Islam is a “very evil and wicked religion.”10 Conservative Catholic writer Robert Spencer, who had already written about the “Islamic threat” in the 1990s, called himself vindicated after 2001, asserting that “violence and terror are fundamentals of Islam.”11

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)
I sat down for a meal with Imam Karim and announced, “I am here to partner with you in your jihad against Islamophobia!” A big smile flashed across his face as he reached out to shake my hand across the table.

But this conversation was not just about my jihad against Islamophobia. As I explained to Imam Karim, “I am on a jihad against all forms of religious discrimination and oppression.” The very same ethical concerns I have for Muslims to experience freedom of worship here in the United States also compels me to speak out against religious discrimination in Muslim majority countries.

Some of my Christian readers may not like my use of the word “jihad” to describe my convictions. But I use the word purposely because I want to help Christians better understand Islam. Jihad can refer to a personal spiritual struggle against our evil inclinations, a campaign, or a war (depending on the context). But in its most basic sense jihad means to strive against something.

My jihad against Islamophobia and all forms of religious discrimination is best summarized in the Seven Resolutions against Prejudice, Hatred and Discrimination, a document written by Christians, Muslims and Jews. “We stand against all forms of religious persecution against Jews, Christians, Muslims, or anyone else. God desires all people to choose and practice their faith based on conscience and conviction rather than any form of coercion or violence (Resolution # 5).”

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) is also engaging in what I call a double-edged jihad. Their “Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign” addresses Islamophobia in the U.S., while their groundbreaking campaign on “Citizenship and the Rights of Minorities in Muslim-Majority Countries” speaks to oppression of other religions.

So where do evangelical Christians and Muslims stand on this double-edged jihad?

Far too many Christians and Muslims prefer a “single edged jihad”—one that only focuses on their own community. In popular parlance, they believe in “religious freedom for me but not for thee!” Christians boldly speak out against persecution of Christians, but few speak out against Islamophobia. Muslims speak out against Islamophobia, but few speak out against persecution of Christians in Muslim countries.

Now let me be clear: Christians must continue to speak out against the present massacre of Christians with ISIS in Iraq and the war in Syria. But few people seem to realize that ISIS has killed far more Muslims than they have Christians. We
need to speak out for Muslims’ religious freedom as well. This orientation to a single-edged jihad is understandable. But it lacks ethical consistency and integrity. And it is unbiblical!

There are no direct commands about freedom of religion in the Bible. But the Bible’s call to imitate God and obey his commands has direct relevance to this issue (Ephesians 5:1; 1 John 5:3). The biblical doctrine of humanity being created in God’s image and the biblical mandate to pursue justice also provide a basis for religious freedom. Here are six reasons why I believe freedom of religion is a crucial biblical mandate:

1. Freedom of religion is based on the creation story.

   God gave Adam and Eve freedom to obey or not to obey his commands (Genesis 1–3). Because God wanted them to choose to love and obey him, he gave them freedom of choice. True relationship demands freedom to choose. We need to imitate God by giving people freedom to choose.

2. Freedom of religion is based on the doctrine of the image of God.

   As I mentioned previously, every person in our global community is created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26-28). When we look at someone, we should not see him or her primarily through the lens of religion or race. We should not see Buddhist, black, white, WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant), Muslim, or Mexican. We should see God’s image bearers. And when we see that image in others, when we treat people with dignity and equality, we honor God. Thus to coerce an image bearer against her will is an affront to her humanity. In fact, lack of religious freedom is an attack on God’s image bearers.5

3. Freedom of religion is based on the life of Christ.

   Jesus repeatedly called people to follow him. But he gave people freedom to choose. Some followed him and others did not. In one of the most poignant moments in the gospels, it says that Jesus felt love for the rich young ruler who decided he would not follow Jesus (Mark 10:21). Jesus demonstrated a love that gave people freedom to accept or reject him. We need to imitate Jesus by giving people freedom to choose.

4. Freedom of religion is based on the Golden Rule.

   Jesus said, “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12).” Surely everyone wants freedom to follow their conscience without coercion. We must grant to everyone the same thing that we desire. We need to obey this command which summarizes the ethical demands of the Law and the Prophets.

5. Freedom of religion is based on the love command.

   Jesus said one of the greatest commands is to “love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31).” The standard for love in this command is the phrase “as yourself”. In other words, love means that I treat my neighbors just how I want to be treated. I want the freedom and protection to worship. This then is what I would want for my neighbor.

6. Freedom of religion is based on the call to justice.

   The Old Testament frequently defines justice in terms of protecting the rights of the poor and needy.

   • “Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute (Isaiah 10:2 NLT).”
   • “Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows (Isaiah 1:17 NLT).”
   • “They deprive the poor of justice and deny the rights of the needy among my people. They prey on widows and take advantage of orphans (Isaiah 10:2 NLT).”

   In other words, “God’s justice aims at creating an egalitarian community in which all classes of people maintain their basic human rights,” including the right to freedom of religion. Furthermore, religious freedom is not about “just us,” it is about justice! Therefore we promote and protect it for all.

   In 2008 I led a conference in Kenya of fifty evangelical leaders from around the world. One of the issues on the table was how to counter the increasing alienation between Muslims and Christians. I began the session with a presentation about my experience in the Common Word Dialogue at Yale—one of the highest profile dialogues between Christians and Muslims in modern times.7

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

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THE MORAL TIES WITHIN THE FAMILY OF ABRAHAM: A Primer on Shared Social Values in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former chief Orthodox rabbi of Great Britain, describes the essential moral concept of *hesed*, which is often translated as ‘kindness’ but also means ‘love.’ This is not passionate love, but rather love displayed through deeds. *Hesed* is covenant love in which parties pledge loyalty to each other and respect the freedom and integrity of the other. *Hesed* means doing acts of kindness for others. It is the gift of love that produces love. Rabbi Hama said, “Just as [God] clothes the naked…so shall you clothe the naked. Just as He visits the sick…so you visit the sick. Just as [God] comforts the mourners…so you comfort mourners. Just as He buries the dead…so you bury the dead (Babylonian Talmud *Sotah* 14a).”

Another classic example of *hesed* is the story in Genesis of Abraham sitting at the entrance of his tent and spotting three strangers approaching. He greets them and brings them inside to give them food and drink. Abraham does not know that the three are angels. But the implication is that Abraham and Sarah, his wife, treat all strangers as if they are angels. As Rabbi Sacks puts it, Abraham and Sarah reach out to embrace the strangers because they are made in the image of God. They see “the divine Other in the human other, because that is how God reveals himself (47).”

Finally, there is the concept of *darkhei shalom*, the “ways of peace,” which takes the kindness and love of others to a universal application. In the Mishnah, Tosefta and Babylonian Talmud, it is the sages following the destruction of the Second Temple who illustrate the application of *darkhei shalom* to non-Jews:

For the sake of peace, the poor of the heathens should not be prevented from gathering gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and corners of the field. Our masters taught: for the sake of peace, the poor of the heathens should be supported as we support the poor of Israel, the sick of the heathens should be visited as we visit the sick of Israel, and the dead of the heathens should be buried as we bury the dead of Israel (Talmud Gittin 61a).

Further on the value of justice, the practice of justice and the seeking of a just society are divine commandments for Jews. While cultivating a pious life through study and contemplation is at the heart of Jewish worship of God, Torah makes clear that that piety must necessarily translate in society through a striving for justice. The pursuit of justice itself or the striving against injustice is a path to piety in Judaism.

Elaborating on this, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman observes that Judaism teaches a “special kind of justice,” an empathic...
justice, which, 

...seeks to make people identify with each another—with each other’s needs, with each other’s hopes and aspirations, with each other’s defeats and transformations. Because Jews have known the distress of slaves and the loneliness of strangers, we are to project ourselves into their souls and make their plight our own.2

The measure of the community’s righteousness, then, can be found in the status and care of the poorest and most powerless. It is on their well-being, and on the righteousness of society, that God has judged and carried out divine blessings and punishments (Shabbat 139a). The significance of the pursuit of justice for the people of Israel becomes clear in the full verse of Deuteronomy (16:20):

“Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live, and inherit the land which the Lord your God gave you.”

Most powerfully and dramatically, the Hebrew Prophets throughout history have proclaimed that authentic worship of God cannot coexist with the perpetration of injustice or unethical treatment of others. Rejecting the pretense or show of piety while the powerless suffer, God in Isaiah (1:11-15) asks:

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

To conclude we offer the Prophet Jeremiah’s summary exhortation: “If you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the stranger, the orphan, and the widow... then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever” (Jeremiah 7:5-7).

Moral Ties and Shared Values In Christianity

In the matter of love and universality of humankind, Christianity inherited Judaism’s concern for the individual relationship with God and the importance of manifesting that love in relations with others. When Jesus was asked which of God’s commandments was most important, Mark records Jesus’ response: “The most important one is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength (12:28-30, citing Deut. 6:4).” He then adds: “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these (Mark 12:31).”

Elaborating on biblical ethics, Jesus famously proclaims that, “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12).” Like Judaism, Jesus asks believers to love all others as God loves creation: God sends sunshine and rain on the good as well as the bad (Matthew 5: 43-48). As God neither distinguishes among his creation nor should his believers.

The most passionate advocate of love in the New Testament, the evangelist Paul writes:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:1-7).

As the Hebrew Prophets had proclaimed, there was a fundamental contradiction between authentic worship of God and mistreatment of others. Early Christians pointed this out in embedded Christian values of love in community as indicated in 1 John 4:19-21:

We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

Christian social values, while centrally based in the cardinal principle of love, also carry over many of the ethical precepts found in Judaism. As Hebrews 13:1-3 explains:

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it (Cf. the open tent of Abraham). Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

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BEYOND COOTIES AND CRUSHES:  
The Potential for Evangelical Leadership  
In Christian Engagement with Islam

My son, Carter, just became engaged to Claire after a long courtship. They are very different from one another, but I am certain they will have a great marriage because even though they are very different people, they have learned to accept and celebrate that difference. They have achieved the mature third phase of adult relationships. For those who are concerned about Islamophobia and wish to combat it within the context of religious liberty in America, I want to offer this developmental progression as an analogy for how evangelical Christians can become leaders in interfaith engagement with Islam.

The first phase involves “cooties.” People who were children in the 1960s know that word. It is what little boys and girls on the playground thought the other ones had, collectively. Similarly, social historians tell us that when a dominant group has to account for an emerging minority community, it often refers to the other as “dirty.” Growing up in Southern California, I heard people describe Mexican-Americans as “dirty.” “Dirty Irish” once referred to Roman Catholics. And now, “dirty Jew” seems to have been largely replaced by “dirty Arab,” aimed at any Muslims. “Dirty” implies infectiousness. Indeed, that is the point. Many self-professed “evangelicals” today speak of Islam this way, especially public figures. But it should also be noted this is the way some other people speak of evangelicals. This is often true of my people, the mainline Protestants. The consensus in this group seems to be that evangelicals are now the “other,” and are part of the problem. But toward Muslims, our clique has passed into the adolescent second phase of interfaith relationships.

The second phase involves crushes. Teen-aged boys and girls will often do anything to be liked as well as be liked by the other. They become so smitten they are more than willing to abandon their distinctiveness. They wear anything, say anything, and do anything to be accepted by them. More to the point, they project their own views and values on the other and they idealize the reflection of that projection. Many of us seem to be in this adolescent state of interfaith engagement. We are eager to reach out and quick to dismiss differences. We emphasize our common descent from Abraham as a way of saying we are, really, all the same.

What is worth noting is that this fundamental homogeneity is thought to be, necessarily, a good thing. In fact sometimes, liberal Christianity’s approach to people of other faiths can be perceived as arrogant, dismissive and insensitive. Of course, this is unintended, but one subliminal message in our attempt at hospitality is that we are the broad-minded ones, generous
enough to be the host. And our oft-used theological assertions that, “We all worship the same God,” or “All roads lead to the same place,” must be infuriating to the many who do not believe so. They must find these kinds of comments to be condescending and patronizing, especially when they are made by the dominant, power group.

To be sure, this phase can also be a wonderful experience, as hatred and fear seem to disappear. That is a big improvement and a necessary developmental step. But like teen-love, it also bears the prospect of misunderstanding, disappointment, and disaffection if the parties cannot move beyond infatuation. And ultimately, it is only a stage toward true acceptance of the inherently exotic beauty and value of the other.

At my institution, Wesley Theological Seminary, we have a rich diversity—albeit within the Christian family—of gender, age, race and ethnicity. Our students range in theological families from Unitarians to Pentecostals. However, just as an international airport terminal has diversity, we long for, and work toward what we call a “communion in our diversity.” But we do not imagine that everyone leaves the communion table a Methodist. Diversity is as essential for community as it is in the natural ecosystem. And even though many evangelicals today may be in that first phase of engagement with Muslims, my hope is they can lead us toward a richer and more interesting life together.

Let me be more precise in my labeling. Sometimes, “evangelical” refers to a grouping of denominations. It also can carry certain cultural and even regional connotations. It is sometimes modified as “conservative evangelical.” But I want to speak of “Evangelicals” (switching to a proper noun) as a people who hold and try to live by certain theological principles. Evangelicals believe in the authority of the Old and New Testament as God’s revelation. For them, the essence of the gospel consists in the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ’s atonement. They believe in the necessity of individual conversion and therefore have a strong commitment to proselytizing. That is a version of the classic definition.

Let me say the same thing differently. Evangelicals are those who believe in the authority of scripture as the unique and universal truth for all. They believe there is one God who is to be exalted and that this God desires a society of justice and peace. They believe individual life has a purpose and moves toward a final judgment and the potential of an eternal reward. And so, they believe in the importance of conversion and obedience.

I think what I have just portrayed is also a fair description of what a devout Muslim believes. Before describing what I mean by this let me first characterize the difference between Evangelicals and us other Christians. We differ somewhat in our doctrinal emphases, but more fundamentally, I think the difference is one of degree. All of us give the evangelical propositions lip service, literally—in our hymns and prayers—but historically, we were all evangelical once. But self-identified Evangelicals believe these things, and sing, and pray, with greater fervor and certainty and strength of commitment. This distinctiveness matches the secular meaning of “evangelical,” and is not that zeal the critical difference in this discussion?

Candidly, maybe what tempers the rest of us is a degree of doubt. We are no less sure. But we would rather call it “reasonableness” or “tolerance.” And that makes us more congenial partners in interfaith dialogue at least at first, at the beginning of the conversation. That is especially true if we can find conversation partners who also hold their faiths lightly. I know that last statement is an unfair exaggeration as well as a provocation and in an entirely different paper I would defend intellectual doubt as providential. But here, it is only meant to highlight my key assertion: the people most prepared to understand the experience of being Muslim in America are Evangelicals. And, the real hope is that fervently orthodox Christians and Muslims may live in a peaceable community. We need Evangelicals to take the lead.

Evangelicals are the ones in the Christian community who know what it is to be a religious minority outside the mainstream of American life, to be that foreign body which does not dissolve easily in the melting pot. They know what it is for their beliefs to be “foolishness to the Greeks,” but to profess them anyway. Indeed, they identify with the early church, which had to coexist as a sect in a religiously diverse society. To be an embattled religious minority was an essential feature of the evangelical witness prior to Constantine. That was the age in church history which is the touchstone time, the “Camelot moment,” for modern Evangelicals and nearly all other revival movements within Christianity. Indeed, Evangelicals were in this same position within modern American Christianity until the late 1970s. And, by the way, the vast majority of both African-American and Asian-American Christians, communities which are also familiar with the experience of being minorities in America, are also Evangelical.

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)
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**STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER AGAINST ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY:**
Interfaith Activism in America in a Time of Crisis

My own first exposure to Muslims was in children’s church. The children’s pastor at my Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Kentucky talked to us about the people living in the “10/40 Window” (a term referring to much of the Middle East and North Africa), and told us about the need to love the people there by showing them Jesus. But what does it mean, to show someone Jesus? That is a question I have wrestled with throughout my life thus far, and I still wrestle with it daily, as I know many of you do as well.

Since my days in children’s church, my experience and understanding of Muslims around the globe, and in the U.S., has widened and deepened. I studied in Egypt my last year of college and came to know many Christian and Muslim Egyptians. It was when I returned to the U.S. and felt like I was constantly having to convince people that I did, in fact, receive an incredible welcome in Egypt, that I realized America has a lot of work to do in how Muslims are perceived and presented in popular culture and media.

As I sank deeper into my graduate studies at the University of Denver, where I was doing a hybrid program in religious studies (focused on Islam and comparative religion) and in international politics, I also came to know a number of American Muslims. I realized many things through these relationships, a couple of which I will mention here. In the first I became aware that I tended to think of Islam as something “over there,” since I had experienced Islam primarily in a Middle Eastern context, and had not prior to this point taken the time to get to know and listen to my Muslim neighbors. Second, that the rhetoric and debates about Islam in popular culture and American media tend to entirely disregard the American Muslim people whose lives are so deeply affected by what some think of as extracted intellectual debates.

While my own journey certainly involved learning things (i.e. taking courses in Qur’anic interpretation and Muslim modernities) a huge part of my journey was developing authentic relationships with Muslims that I came to know both abroad and in the U.S.; I did so by taking the time to really listen to them, and allowing myself to be changed through those encounters. Another critical part of this journey for me came with my orientation toward justice for those who are marginalized or “Other-ized” in society. I worked with college students throughout my graduate studies engaging them on issues of racism, poverty, and immigration, and really deepened my own disposition toward seeking justice as an essential part of my faith and my life’s work. This, too, was deeply informed through relationships with people very different from myself and through taking the time to really listen to the pain of others. I was challenged to think hard about what it means to be a good ally, or as my friend Rev. Jennifer Bailey says, “how to humbly but boldly accompany others who are targeted or discriminated against in some way.”

I now direct the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign. This is a coalition of 31 national denominations and organizations, from the Union for Reform Judaism to the Council of Catholic Bishops, Sojourners and the American Baptists, the Christian Reformed Church and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, in partnership with the Islamic Society of North America. All of these groups came together in 2010 when anti-Muslim bigotry was at a high level in order to say publicly that religious communities in the United States will not stand idly by when one community comes under attack. Too many communities have been the targets before, and we have to stand together—shoulder to shoulder—to say that an attack on one is an attack on all.

From the beginning, this campaign asserted that anti-Muslim bigotry is an affront to our religious values—of hospitality, love, and the injunction to refrain from “bearing false witness”—as well as to our American values—of religious freedom, equality, diversity of background and belief etc. As religious communities, each of our own freedoms is dependent upon those being equally extended to other religious communities. If we curtail those freedoms for some, all our freedoms are at risk.

Shoulder to Shoulder started from a national press conference featuring the heads of religious denominations sharing this message, and since 2010, it has been an ongoing campaign working on multiple levels. At the national level, we help keep our member denominations and organizations informed about the experiences of American Muslim communities, how research and activist organizations understand Islamophobia (which, as we know, is complex and well-funded²), and we help coordinate multi-religious responses to
particularly egregious acts of hate, bigotry or discrimination targeting Muslims. We also work with the organizations and denominations to help them equip their clergy with the knowledge, relationships and tools to get to know their Muslim neighbors and stand in solidarity with them.

In asking, what does it mean to stand up with the Other, it is critical to listen to the voices of the American Muslim community, in all its diversity. This is, of course, challenging. American Muslims have different opinions and experiences about various issues and topics, as do other religious communities in America.

While some of our work on this issue is best done at the national level, with denominational leadership and in conversation with other national groups and government bodies, we also know that the long-term sustainable work to create more inclusive communities is done at local levels. In this vein, we also have a community membership network of local congregations, interfaith organizations, and community groups that have chosen to join us. We help connect them to one another, share best practices, and engage them in nationwide initiatives. In some cases, we work with our member organizations to help them build partnerships or deepen their engagement with one another in their communities. For instance, we are working with community members in Irving, Texas, the town recently made famous by the “Ahmed clock incident,” to help them put together some meetings and an event to build partnerships with Irving-based clergy and church communities that have until now been fairly quiet locally; this despite the the mayor’s attempts to disparage local Muslim community over and over again.4

This year, we brought twenty four Jewish, Christian and Muslim emerging leaders to the Islamic Society of North America’s national convention as part of our Emerging Religious Leaders Seminar.5 Participants came to Chicago a day and a half in advance of the ISNA convention in order to prepare and to discuss the issue of Islamophobia as well as the opportunities and challenges of dealing with it as emerging clergy or interfaith leaders. Participants immersed themselves in the ISNA convention sessions, with Shoulder to Shoulder-led breakout sessions, learned from the experience of the American Muslim community in a way that they would not otherwise. Now, these participants are writing, reflecting, and acting in their own communities, as a way of implementing what they have learned through this program.

Another manifestation of anti-Muslim bigotry around which we have organized is the anti-foreign law trend. Originally posited as an anti-Shari’a law movement in state legislatures, this trend has morphed into an anti-foreign law trend sparked by a language shift declaring Shari’a as unconstitutional.6 Many legal experts, including the American Bar Association, have publically voiced that this trend is unconstitutional and discriminatory.7 Shoulder to Shoulder has worked with religious leaders nationwide, coordinating with local religious leaders in states where foreign law bans have been proposed, to inform them about the bigotry entailed in this legislation and its potential negative effects on religious communities.

Additionally, in the fall of 2014, we worked with a broad coalition of national organizations to engage and network with local religious communities in Alabama, where there was an anti-foreign law amendment on the ballot. The head of the Christian Coalition of Alabama spoke-out against the proposed amendment, and encouraged its members to do the same. This trend shows how discrimination meant to target one religious group can in fact have negative impacts on many religious communities, since the U.S. Constitution does not allow singling out any particular one as such. It is thus a good example of how our religious communities writ large should not only engage in solidarity with American Muslims (because it is the morally right thing to do) but that in doing so, religious communities are also standing up for their own rights.

As a coalition of religious leaders, we push our public officials to stand against anti-Muslim rhetoric, because we need to hear from those in positions of power, whether religious or political, when people are being targeted. We are working with a coalition on a religious freedom/anti-bigotry pledge to that effect this fall, with Imam Mohammed Magid, Pastor Bob Roberts, and a number of others who come from different communities but are concerned about the political rhetoric. Disparaging rhetoric, and the failure to call it out, has real life consequences and bolsters those promoting hate against Muslims.

We are also currently working with our members and a number of refugee resettlement organizations to form an interfaith working group to address the ways in which the Syrian humanitarian crisis is both impacted by, and will have an impact on, U.S. society.

(The rest of this article is available at fuller.edu/eifd/islamophobia)

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Leading a large Muslim congregation in a place like Los Angeles in today’s political and cultural climate is challenging. Yes, like any other faith community in the increasingly irreligious environment in the U.S., Muslims also face the difficult task of passing on faith to the next generation. However, added to this challenge is the torrent of hostile rhetoric about Islam and Muslims permeating the media and perpetuated by a number of prominent Evangelical leaders.

Religion and the Media

It might be self-evident to suggest that the mainstream U.S. media does not do a good job of reporting on religion. The media, by its nature, tends to focus on conflict and controversy (i.e. What bleeds, leads). Examples include the Catholic sex abuse scandal, evangelicals and abortion clinic bombings/shootings as well as Islam and terrorism etc. The reality is that those involved in these crimes represent a very small percentage of their respective faith communities. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of their co-religionists condemn their actions, regardless of whether or not the perpetrators attempt to justify themselves through faith and theology. The perspective of the majority is rarely given prominence in the mainstream media. Despite the fact that every Muslim religious leader of significance in both East and West has condemned all terrorism and particularly that committed by al-Qaida, ISIL, Boko Haram, and other such “Muslim” groups, the most often asked question of Muslim leaders, when speaking to general audiences in the West, is “Why are Muslims not speaking out in condemning terrorism?” This is an understandable phenomenon given the media’s coverage. What is disappointing is that evangelical pastors, at much higher rates than the average public, are buying into the perception that Islam is “spiritually evil,” “promotes violence,” and is “dangerous.”

The Role of Religion in Conflict

As a person who takes religion seriously, I hope and pray that people are motivated by their faith and that their religious convictions inform their behavior. The reality is that most people, in today’s world, are motivated far more by other factors, preeminent amongst them are culture, nationalism, economics, and power. We live in a world of nation-states, and I would argue that nationalism, not religion, is the single biggest cause of conflict around the world. While it is true that religion could be a factor in one’s national identity, it is often not the single biggest factor. If you take a look at bloody conflicts around the globe in recent years, the most common factor amongst them is that competing nationalist identity groups were fighting for control of the state and its resources. Take for example, the Basques in Northern Spain—all Catholic, but the Basques wanted their own country in the Pyrenees. In Rwanda, the Hutus and Tutsis were two tribes competing for the political power and control of the state. Religion was not a major factor there. Turkey has been fighting the Kurds, a minority ethnic population in the Southeast portion of the country that wants independence. Both groups are Sunni Muslim, but they have competing nationalist narratives. Sometimes the competing nationalist narratives in conflict zones do focus around religious identity. Think of Northern Ireland or the Sunnis and Shi’is in Iraq.

My point in all of this is simply that religion is not the driving source of today’s conflicts. Religion is often coopted by modern nationalist groups to rally popular support for political, economic and hegemonic goals. Imagine the situation in Myanmar. Radical ultranationalist Buddhist monks are encouraging their followers to violently attack the Rohingya Muslim minority.

Changing the Narrative

Religion, when done right, can, in fact, be a source of peacemaking and conflict-resolution. The shared values of Islam and Christianity, for example, can actually serve as a foundation for a collaboration toward the common good. So where does that leave U.S. Muslims and Evangelical Christians. It has been my deep experience that the most welcoming and engaging Christians have been the mainline protestant groups. They consistently welcome Muslim speakers to help their congregants better
understand Islam and their Muslim neighbors. They also express greater interest in collaborating on issues related to social justice and charity. I cannot tell you to how many Protestant churches I have been personally invited to speak. As for Evangelical communities, my experience is quite different. Most evangelical churches seem more hesitant to invite a Muslim to speak directly to the congregations about Islam. Perhaps it is because of the attitudes expressed in the survey sighted above. Perhaps it has to do with the focus on evangelism and not wanting to confuse their congregants with mixed theological messages. Perhaps, power and politics is playing a role. Regardless, there is some hope in the efforts of Bob Roberts and Imam Mohammed Maged. They have undertaken the task of building bridges of understanding and close friendships amongst Imams and Pastors. This goal of efforts like these is to break down the negative stereotypes of the other and eventually change the narrative and discourse in the U.S. about Islam and Muslims.
“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” said Franklin D. Roosevelt in his inauguration speech as the 32nd president of the United States. At that time, the “thing” Roosevelt was insinuating not to fear was the economic crisis of the 1930s. Today, America is the largest economy in the world, and by far the largest military superpower, but Americans are not without fears. A wave of Islamophobia has gripped the social and political landscape, exemplified by popular support for presidential frontrunner Donald Trump, and his anti-Islamic policies.

While everybody might agree that generalizations are dangerous, and therefore not all Muslims are the same, media outlets choose to highlight the radical side of Islam, which, intentionally or not, sends a persuasive message that all Muslims are violent evildoers. As such, anyone that sides with Islam or sympathizes with Muslims is betraying peace and humanity. The worst expression of American Islamophobia condemns every Muslim as a terrorist, and charges those who have Muslims friends with treason. So pervasive is this attitude that President Obama, although he openly embraces Christianity, was harassed for simply being a descendant of a Muslim family, as if being Muslim is a crime, or having a Muslim president is unconstitutional!

The issue with American Islamophobia is that it is not just a national problem confined to the North American continent. In the post-Cold War era, being the superpower that America is means that America's problems are also the world’s problems. Fearing Islam, and anything that represents or is connected to it leads to irrational and hostile behavior. Concepts like “war on terror” and “axis of evil” emerge and form a narrative that warrants attacking Muslims. It gets messy when we consider that nearly a quarter of the world’s population is Muslim. It is especially problematic in the Middle East, home of Islam’s holy sites, and where the U.S. has various interests to protect.

America’s antagonistic attitude towards Muslims distorts the image of Christianity in the Middle East, even though not all Americans are Jesus-loving, Bible-reading, God-fearing Christians. In the Middle East, religion is so intertwined with culture that secularism is almost an alien concept. Therefore, from a Middle Eastern perspective, America must have a national religion, and for good and bad reasons, Christianity is perceived to be that religion. So, when the U.S. follows anti-Islamic policies, it creates a skewed image of Christianity in the Middle East. Perhaps disciples of Jesus in America feel immune to such criticism, but that does not acquit them from the responsibility to redress their country’s fear of Islam.

The issue here is not whether Islam is a violent or peace-loving religion. Religion is subject to interpretation, and for every Muslim fanatic in the world, you can find at least one or two moderates. Nor is the issue denial of harm done in the name of Islam. Without a doubt, a lot of terrorist attacks have been committed in the name of Islam. Without a doubt, a lot of terrorist attacks have been committed in the name of Islam. At the same time, much good has also been done by devout Muslims. The pertinent question that I believe needs to be asked is this: what is at the root of American Islamophobia, and how should Americans respond to that?

To summarize, it appears to me that Americans value their national security above all else, and when external forces—be it communist ideology, economic crisis, nuclear armament, or Islamic terror—threaten their stability, the nation reacts defiantly out of horror. Of course, it is virtuous to love peace and favor stability, but to what extent will Americans go to secure their own peace and stability, and more importantly, at what cost? I think the problem with American evangelicals is that they have become so engrossed with their national interests, they have forgotten that their primary calling is to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, justice and mercy trump national security and self-interest. American evangelicals err when they do not trust God to protect them, and instead resort to other means to secure their status, often at the expense of other people.

With love I say the following: American evangelicals must not react to Islamic terrorism out of fear, but pause and think rationally about why they are being attacked. They ought to repent, on behalf of their countrymen, for putting their trust in their own might, not in God. They should serve the Kingdom of God before their national...
My first visual exposure to Islam occurred at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The stunning beauty and color was expressed in artistry from both public and domestic spaces. The art embodied a theology in which all dimensions of life were held and pervaded by the power and authority of Allah. Taken together, it portrayed a vision that was philosophical and practical, comprehensive and coherent, beautiful and inspirational.

As a relatively new Christian at that time, I knew I lived in a different theological frame, but one that was no less comprehensive or coherent, no less committed to beauty or function. Yet, what struck me most was the profound integration and presence of faith in all the physical structures and practical implements of life. This felt both engulfing and moving.

A few years later, I found myself driving through the countryside of Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country, when our car was halted at a police checkpoint. We were held for a few minutes, before being allowed to drive on under police escort. As we came around a bend in the road, we were suddenly in awe to find ourselves literally driving through a vast white sea of Muslims at prayer—a kneeling crowd extending as far as we could see on both sides of the road. Newspapers said one million people were gathered that day on the plain near Dhaka. Whatever else this unforgettable image contained, it was a scene of peaceable, communal devotion that humbled my Christian practice.

So much has gripped the world related to Islam since those days: the 9/11 attacks and the hysteria and fear that followed, the subsequent years of protracted wars, the Syrian civil war and the massive immigrant crisis, the attacks in France and elsewhere and the torture and barbarity of ISIS both in the Middle East and beyond. Islamophobia now pulsates around the globe. Based on acts of violence, including public beheadings, declarations of hatred and attacks against Christians and Western states, conflicting representations of Islam and of Islam’s attitudes towards non-Muslims—the fires of Islamophobia burn-on daily. Meanwhile, the vast majority of Muslim scholars have critiqued and rejected the rhetoric of militant Islam, underscoring their commitment to Islam as the way of peace in the name of and for the glory of Allah. But these declarations receive little attention in the Western press, garner little increased trust, and do not seem to affect common opinion, political rhetoric, or popular Western biases. The check on Islamaphobia seems weak when measured by the fires of Western media.

As a theological insider to the Christian tradition, I know what it is like to have proponents of the same faith I trust say and do things that make the Christian faith appear to be hateful and grotesque. When fellow Christians spout degrading vitriol towards other Christians, or Muslims, or others, I am grieved and horrified. When their words readily breed self-referential violence in the name of justified protectionism, I am disaffected and stunned. These are as offensive to my sensibility towards what it means to be Christian as the actions of some jihadists are offensive to what it means to be Muslim. These dynamics reveal the painful collisions within our religious traditions that make inter-religious engagement that much more difficult: “whose justice?,” “which rationality?,” indeed.

One of the more surprising and profound counter-currents to Islamophobia occurred for me one day in Berkeley, California at the end of a long week of campus hostilities and demonstrations around these religious and political issues. The moment was reported by the editor of the campus newspaper in the following way:

I can conclude only by ceding the floor to my friend Tinley Ireland, who gave, for my money at least, the best speech of the evening. Just as the sun set, shining right into her face, she stood up on the steps of Sproul Hall on the same consecrated spot where earlier in the day the fear-based community had shouted itself hoarse about the people “over there” who are just waiting, waiting to get us. She stood there and told us about her faith. She talked about how the hardest part of following Christ was to love not just her friend, but her enemies too…At the end she asked who in the crowd didn’t believe that Jesus was the son of God. Most hands went up. Mine did. She smiled, and as the light faded she simply and truly said, “I love you.” I’ve been on the receiving end of a few punches in my life, but nothing ever hit me that hard. I don’t know exactly what kind of politics or religion or philosophy that is—but whatever it is, where can I sign up? (Scott Lucas, Daily Cal, October 29, 2007)

Now there’s an approach that might make a difference.

Mark Labberton assumed his role as Fuller’s fifth and current president on July 1, 2013. After serving in pastoral roles for three decades—16 years of them as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California—Labberton joined Fuller’s faculty in 2009, to teach and direct the Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute of Preaching.
ISLAMOPHOBIA: A View from the UK

(Note: this response interacts with the Johnston and McAllister-Wilson papers included in this issue of the journal).

I recently received a letter from a Christian organization in the UK suggesting that we need “reconciliation between individuals, between communities, and between religions.” The first two I totally agree with. But reconciliation between religions? Really? What does that mean? What would it look like?

For all the common—maybe “similar” would be a better word—ground between Christianity and Islam, there remain many differences. In my experience the majority of British Muslims are keen to maintain these differences and, after a brief dalliance with the idea that “we’re all the same”, are quick to point out where we Christians have gone irreconcilably wrong. Yet from that starting point they are happy to converse, as was the Muslim who said to Joseph Cumming, “we want to work with you Evangelicals, because we feel like we have something in common with you…we want to be talking with Christians who take their scriptures seriously.”

Admitting and focusing on difference is not the beginning of Islamophobia but rather it is part of the solution to it.

The word ‘Islamophobia’ was brought into mainstream usage following a 1997 UK report. It highlighted a very real problem of discrimination against Muslims brought about by fear and racism. In the wake of recent terrorist attacks in Europe it remains a problem and hate crimes against Muslims in London rose by a reported 70 percent in 2015. However, the term and the concept itself have been extensively criticized by academics, politicians and Christians alike. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali defines it as “an unreasonable fear of all Muslims, without taking into account their beliefs, their direction in life and what tradition of Islam they come from” but goes on to point out that it has to be distinguished from “a reasonable fear, for example, of people who are committed to terrorism to achieve their aims.”

Whilst an irrational blanket fear of all Muslims is clearly wrong, this should not blind us to problematic issues that need to be addressed. The concern of some British Christians is that political correctness and fear of being branded Islamophobic can stifle genuine debate about Islam. One British pastor puts it like this: “We totally reject the charge of Islamophobia, which is often just a word used to put off people from being critical of Islam while Muslims remain free to criticise anyone they choose.” Clearly this was not what the authors of the original report had in mind as they rightly pointed out that:

It is not intrinsically phobic or prejudiced to disagree with or to disapprove of Muslim beliefs, laws or practices...In a liberal democracy it is inevitable and healthy that people will criticize and oppose, sometimes robustly, opinions and practices with which they disagree.

A further criticism is that the term itself reifies Islam as a single concept. Reductionism is always the enemy of progress. Islam and Muslims are hugely diverse and complex. Only a nuanced approach to this complexity can hope to bear fruit. The common reductions heard in the UK today from politicians as well as Christians and Muslims are arguments such as:

1. Islam and the Qur'an are violent; therefore true Muslims—such as those of ISIS—will inevitably be violent. The only solution is to expose the Qur'an and Muhammad as frauds.
2. Islam is peace and has nothing to do with the violence, which is all politically motivated. The solution is to bomb the extremists and defeat them militarily.
3. It is the West that is violent and Western imperialist interventions are the cause of all the trouble. The West has to be humbled.

Each has an element of truth. No one equation provides a sufficient explanation or solution to the presenting complexity of Islam and its relations with the West.

On the other hand, Douglas Johnston, drawing on Thomas Kidd’s excellent work (as printed in this issue of the journal), depicts something of the complexity on the Christian side. The historical background is, if anything, even more intense in Europe than in the United States. Comments by the reformers picturing Muhammad
as an antichrist second only to the pope were made against the backdrop of the Ottoman Empire hammering at the gates of Vienna.9 The missional aspect is also foremost in the minds of many British evangelicals which leads them to be cautious of inter-faith dialogue which they fear could dilute their passion to share the Good News. However, whilst theological disputes over the nature of Islam and whether Allah is the God of the Bible are as sharp as ever, British evangelicals are not nearly so enamored with doomsday scenarios and Zionism as their American counterparts seem to be. Whilst some do embrace these interests, the majority seemed to have been tempered by the work of Stephen Sizer and Colin Chapman who share a concern for justice and freedom for the Palestinians.10

However, that same concern for justice and freedom also drives probably the greatest concern and complaint that British Christians have: the persecution of their brothers and sisters in Muslim-majority contexts. Even apart from the horrors inflicted on Christian minorities by ISIS, Open Doors reports that 8 of the top 10 countries on their 2016 watch list of places it is difficult to live as a Christian are Muslim-majority nations. Also, many British evangelical churches subscribe to the Barnabas Fund magazine which each month details a sad litany of violence against Christians.11 Such treatment has been dubbed “Christianophobia” emphasising the fact that religious phobia is not the preserve of the West.12 Muslims too have issues to address.

These issues doubtlessly could be divided into a threefold matrix to mirror that which Johnston constructs. Politically, Muslims regardless of their own history in this respect, would point to two centuries of Western imperialism that they feel has still not ended. Christian minorities are often seen as a fifth column and pay a high price for Western actions. Anti-Zionism too plays its part and many within ISIS are eschatologically driven, quite apart from traditional theological interpretations that problematize dhimmi communities and apostasy. Finally, a supercissionist worldview in many cases drives expansionism and da’wa at both the state and civil society levels.

The key question is then: how can Christians love Muslims when there are such difficult issues to address and when they hear so much about Muslims persecuting Christians?

Certainly there needs to be an evolution in the way that Christians relate to Muslims. Playground taunts about religious “cooties” (whatever they are!) are not good enough. Neither do we want to be naive victims of a rose-tinted crush, which patronisingly ignores difference. But what does a “third level” relationship look like? Reconciliation between religions? Marriage? Syncretism? Surely not. Rather mature relationships between individuals and communities must be mutually critical and able to withstand the difficult questions and issues that need to be processed, whilst maintaining the boundaries that clearly demarcate the faiths.

I recently wrote (I hope) a positive yet critical piece in the CMCS Research Briefing looking at the horrendous Dabiq propaganda produced by ISIS and comparing it to a magazine called Haqiqah produced by British imams to counteract it.13 Whilst Dabiq presents a compelling call to adventure and sacrifice on behalf of their self-proclaimed Caliphate, the Haqiqah magazine has no such appeal. Muslims are to be nice and to behave themselves. No extremism allowed.

Yet extremism is a natural part of the human psyche. Channelled rightly we applaud it.14 When it goes awry it is a terrible thing. Evangelicals are indeed zealous people. The challenge is to see that zeal channelled into loving and calling others. Brother Andrew, in his book Secret Believers, recounts the story of converts to Christianity in a Muslim country. Although fictional, the story is based on real-life situations known to the author and makes sobering reading as it tells of the challenges, persecution and eventual martyrdom faced by these faithful believers. Remarkably, after such an account the message of the remainder of the book is not that Christians should fear Muslims or be resentful, but rather it is a challenge to a “good jihad” that would bring hope to the Muslim world. Andrew presents four challenges to the church today: “to love all Muslims by giving them the Good News, to forgive when we are attacked, to live lives totally committed to Jesus Christ, and to engage in the real war—the spiritual war.” He suggests that the only hope for the world is if millions of Christians learn to love Muslims with Christ’s love. Now that is an extreme way to overcome a phobia! EFD

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The relationship between Latinos and Muslims is over 1200 years old. It is as old as the North African invasions of the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century and as new as the latest encounter of Latino and Muslim immigrants in urban neighborhoods in the United States. It is reflected in the Arabic influence on the Spanish language, including a theological one, and in efforts to mobilize U.S. Latinos for mission in Muslim majority countries. The links between Islam and Latinos are deeply embedded in the Latino sub-conscious and demonstrated in our way of thinking and speaking. And they are also impacted by the current wave of Islamophobia that is flowing through the United States.

The encounter that began in the eighth century created a complex relationship between Christians and Muslims on the Peninsula. At times there was some level of toleration between Christians, Muslims and Jews. But the Muslims were seen as the invaders and Spanish identity was forged in the struggle to free the Peninsula of these foreigners.

The final battle liberating Spain from the Muslim rulers happened only months before Columbus arrived in the New World. The Spaniards brought with them a sense of destiny, that God had freed them from the Muslims (a last Crusade), but also that God wanted them to conquer the new land. But they also brought a language, a worldview and a religious understanding deeply impacted by seven centuries of interaction with Islam.

The Spanish empire tried to keep Muslims and Jews, or Muslim and Jewish converts to Christianity, from migrating to the new world. But their influence remained in the background. After independence from Spain some Latin American countries allowed migration from the Muslim world. Today there are small, but significant communities of people from various parts of the Middle East in Latin American countries. Many of them come from the minority Christian communities in those regions, but there are also many Muslim immigrants, as well as their descendants. Some of these immigrants have had a very significant impact in their adoptive countries and a few of them have migrated from Latin America to the US.

In the last few years there has also been an “evangelistic” re-encounter in both directions. There are now a number of dawah oriented mosques in Latin America and there are growing numbers of Latin American evangélicos who are going into Muslim majority countries as missionaries. In the last few years, some U.S. Latinos/as have also become missionaries in the Muslim world.

Some of the most interesting places of new encounter have been urban areas in the U.S. Immigrants from Muslim countries and Latinos have sometimes found themselves living in the same neighborhoods. For the most part they have not interacted very much. But in both communities there have been leaders who see the other with “evangelistic” eyes. One can find Spanish language literature inviting Latinos to Islam and there are a few Latino churches that have concluded that if they send missionaries abroad, they should also do mission among their Muslim neighbors.

Dawah, the preaching of Islam, takes a slightly different form among Latinos and Latin Americans. Because of the historical links, conversion to Islam by Latinas is often called reversion, a return to what was. Though the numbers are small, it is estimated that up to 6 percent of all U.S. Muslims are from Latin America, though that number includes people of Middle Eastern descent who migrated from Latin America to the U.S. But it also includes Latino converts (the majority of which are women).

It is in this environment that Latino evangélicos deal with Islam and Islamophobia. We inhabit the same environment in which the reality of attacks is translated into the manufacture of fear. So evangélico communities face the same concerns as their non-Latino evangelical neighbors.

But the inter-related history and various encounters provide opportunities for thinking differently about the relationship between Latino evangélicos and Muslims. First of all, some of those Latino/a Muslims may be relatives or at least people with which we have had interaction for an extended period of time.

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After reading David Johnston and David McAllister-Wilson’s thought-provoking articles, I would like to respond by reflecting on the difference between high-level interfaith dialogue and grassroots dialogue. Currently, while the media’s attention in Syria is focused on peace talks in the political fora, there are local community groups negotiating with one another for safe passage, humanitarian aid and ways to co-exist during difficult days. When reading about historic church schisms in the Middle East, between Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants, I am reminded that Middle Eastern Christians have long lived side-by-side. While priests and pastors may have struggled to find common ground with one another, more often than not two Christian neighbors from different denominations regularly became friends by sharing a cup of sugar.

Similarly, interfaith dialogue happens every day when two people from different religious backgrounds learn to co-exist. This has been happening between Christians and Muslims for 1500 years in the Middle East, and it is now starting to occur in historically Christian countries.

When I was researching religious identity in Syria, I interviewed dozens of Muslim women who were proud to tell me that they have Christian friends who they visit on Christmas; then, their Christian friends come over to their house for a visit on Eid. A nurse told me that she always works on Christmas and Easter so that her Christian colleagues can take a holiday, and they return the favor on her holidays. Similarly, Christian and Muslim women in the Middle East may send their children to the same schools, shop at the same stores, endure the same electricity cuts and political pressures, and even have crushes on the same movie stars.

It would be ingenuous to suggest that interfaith dialogue at the grassroots level is perfect and that everyone always gets along. But sometimes we get caught up in dialogueing about what we believe and why we disagree, rather than simply living life side-by-side.

McAllister-Wilson presents a useful framework for considering inter-communal encounters in his description of how we move from “cooties to crushes.” Sometimes a long-term romance flourishes as a result of these encounters while other times friendships bloom. Friendship is not just a nice coincidence; for many people, it is the heart of dialogue. Feminist identity theory argues that women tend to define themselves in terms of relationships. Indeed, for many people, decisions are made with the interests and pressures of others at the forefront, and values are more strongly influenced by affinitive relationship than by any rational argument or conviction.

When we look at global inter-faith dialogue, women are conspicuously absent from most visible fora. Women’s voices are rare in inter-faith publications and their faces are missing from the photographs taken at many high-level consultations. Nonetheless, women are dialogueing about shared interests, including the need for justice in their communities, as well as seeking to build structures that support the best interests of their families. I agree with Johnston that it is not realistic to suggest that neither evangelical Christians nor equally fervent Muslims will give up their universalist beliefs for the sake of dialogue. Having said that, there are so many things we can dialogue about other than beliefs! Let us not lose sight of this, because in celebrating our diversity, there is space to also celebrate our commonality.

I am reminded of how I met my dearest Muslim friends. On a long ride in a shared taxi during Ramadan, a young woman and I started talking about fasting including why we fast, what our respective religions teach about the practice and why we love these religions. We agreed about many things but also disagreed quite a bit. At the end of three hours in a cramped car, she invited me to dinner. This was the beginning of a precious friendship with her and her sisters. She did not care that we had as many agreements as we had disagreements; she was just glad to have a conversation with someone different from her. She was surprised I was willing to be her friend and I was, frankly, surprised she was willing to be mine. Yes, we talked about religion, but we did so because it was something to talk about, not because our relationship hinged on mutual accord or discord.

In London, where I live, I walk by a school on my way to work in the mornings. I live in an extremely diverse community, with Muslims, Christians, Hindus, atheists and adherents to various other belief systems. As parents wait with their children outside the school for the gates to open each morning, I see that diversity. Sometimes I see two eastern European mothers chatting with each other, and across the street two Arab Muslim mothers doing the same. Yet other times, I notice parents talking with people who look very
different from them. Who know what they are discussing—perhaps their children’s upcoming play or the volunteer roster for the school. Perhaps they are talking about planning a clean up campaign for the nearby camp or sharing ideas about how to shop due to an increase in prices. Or perhaps they are talking about religion. Regardless, the important thing is they are communicating and as they do so—while watching their children play on the playground— they cannot deny their commonalities.

I understand that many American evangelicals feel fear when considering friendship with Muslims. But my dear friend whose story I shared above told me she used to be scared of Americans like me, too. Grassroots dialogue, a dialogue built on friendship and common interests, is an important first step to breaking down that mutual fear.

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Secondly, if Latino evangélicos are sending people into the Muslim world to build relationships and practice hospitality, then it makes natural sense that we should do that here. Thirdly, if Latino and Muslim immigrants are already interacting in places where neither has power, it creates the space for people to practice a friendship oriented “evangelism” or “dawah.” By recognizing that both are “evangelistically” oriented faiths, and by encountering each other where neither has power, there is a new space, and a potential bridge, where friendship and hospitality might be the guiding principle, instead of fear and suspicion. May it be, by God’s grace.

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any and all religions, American evangelicals can embody their heavenly citizenship, and ultimately weaken the grip of Islamophobia. Essentially, the challenge is to conquer fear by submitting to God and to resist evil by serving justice and extending mercy around the world.

Finally, American evangelicals should not forget that many Christians in the Middle East also suffer from Islamophobia, albeit for different reasons than their American brothers and sisters. We need your help in that regards as well. Help us remember that no servant is greater than his teacher, and that suffering is part of our call. Instead of propagating fear, encourage us to love our Muslim neighbors as ourselves. Pray for us to endure the hardships before us, and not run away from them. Support us as we serve our communities, and show us how to treat people equally. Teach us how to give generously, and expect our reward from our Father in heaven.

Together, let us not fear those who kill the body but who cannot kill the soul, and instead fear and serve Him who has the power over every body and soul.

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JUAN F. MARTÍNEZ
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L’Islam est, en France, une religion importante puisque on s’accorde généralement à penser qu’elle représente 6% de la population. Rappelons que les différentes traditions protestantes ensemble ne rassemblent que 2%. Ces chiffres laissent bien sûr le catholicisme très majoritaire, même si nous savons que, comme pour toutes les religions dont l’Islam, il y a une grande différence entre un sentiment d’appartenance et la pratique réelle d’une religion. La présence des musulmans peut être variée selon les régions, mais le sentiment de la population l’est sans doute moins car il semble s’appuyer plus sur des images véhiculées par les médias que sur la réalité d’une présence effective de personnes de religion musulmanes. Cela dit, certains quartiers de banlieue des certaines villes peuvent être si largement à majorité musulmane qu’ils en deviennent des sortes de ghettos. En disant cela, on sent déjà la difficulté que peut représenter la différence entre une religion avec ses adeptes réels et une population plus ou moins rapidement identifiée avec sa religion d’origine.

Si une certaine animosité à l’égard des musulmans existe depuis longtemps, il va de soi que la radicalisation assez forte de bien des musulmans et surtout de jeunes, la situation internationale dans laquelle la France est impliquée en Afrique et au Proche Orient, et surtout la montée du terrorisme d’origine islamiste, y compris sur le sol national ont favorisé la croissance d’un sentiment de plus en plus ouvertement islamophobe comme celle de partis d’extrême droite.

Les origines de l’Islam en France
Les musulmans français sont, en très grande majorité issus du Maghreb, c’est à dire de territoires très liés à la France. Si pour plusieurs de ces pays, comme le Maroc ou la Tunisie, l’indépendance a été acquise de manière relativement paisible, l’Algérie l’a conquise après une longue guerre (1954-1962) qui a laissé des traces dans la mémoire collective. Le retour massif de « pieds noirs », c’est à dire de français ayant vécu au Maghreb depuis souvent de nombreuses générations a également eu une influence sur le regard que la population porte depuis déjà longtemps sur l’Islam. Les évangéliques français sont influencés par l’opinion de beaucoup de leurs concitoyens sur l’Islam et les musulmans.

Le regard évangélique sur l’Islam

Mais d’autres facteurs entrent également en jeu. Le rapport entre protestants évangéliques et protestants plus libéraux est très largement un rapport conservateurs / progressistes. Cela se retrouve dans les grands débats éthiques actuels. Mais cela influe assez largement sur leur attitude. Face à l’Islam, la réaction de beaucoup est aujourd’hui celle de la peur et du soupçon. Le musulman est suspecté de vouloir conquérir l’Europe et d’être lui-même, comme en miroir, dans une volonté de conversion des personnes à sa religion. On se situe donc dans une rivalité radicale et cela d’autant plus que la solidarité avec les chrétiens persécutés du Proche Orient est fortement ressentie. Si les médias évangéliques officiels ont une attitude qui reste modérée et prudente, les sites et les blogs que l’on peut trouver sur Internet sont parfois beaucoup plus vêhéments et certains sont clairement islamophobes.

Dialogue et témoignage
Il existe également de plus en plus de chrétiens évangéliques qui

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Is it appropriate for Christians to assert that Christianity advocates love and forgiveness, whereas Islam promotes violent jihad and terrorism? How should Christians respond to those who make such comparisons between Christianity and Islam? I think it is important for those of us who are Christians not to compare the best parts of the Christian tradition with the worst parts of Islam.

We live in a world in which people commonly compare themselves favorably to others by selective and unfair means. For example, politicians often focus on the weaknesses of their opponents while highlighting their own strengths. Such comparisons frequently involve distortions on both sides: twisting their opponents’ views and hiding flaws in their own positions. We also see such behavior in families and among friends. We tend to focus on the bothersome flaws in someone else while ignoring problems in our own behavior. Yet, as we know, a family or group of friends in which people dwell on the flaws rather than the strengths of others can quickly degenerate into accusations and unhappiness.

Jesus has a word for such situations. He criticizes offering to take the speck of sawdust out of our neighbor’s eye when we have a plank in our own (Matt. 7:3-5; Lk. 6:41-42). We so readily see a small blemish in someone else while ignoring major flaws in ourselves. Jesus identifies this behavior as hypocrisy and encourages us to remove the flaws in ourselves before working to remove the blemish we see in someone else.

Similarly, in his “Dialogue Decalogue,” Leonard Swidler proposes that in interreligious dialogue we should not “compare our ideals with our partner’s practice, but rather our ideals with our partner’s ideals, our practice with our partner’s practice.” Swidler recognizes that we tend to offer an idealized version of our own religious position, even though we may never live up to such ideals, and then focus on some of the worst practices in another religion.

In the context of Christian engagement with Islam, we should not compare our best with their worst. Both Christianity and Islam have elements that depart from the best ideals of their religion. But if one side compares its best to the worst in the other, that is not a fair comparison. Instead, we should compare their best with our best, or their worst with our worst.

Christians are often inclined to see Islam as more violent than Christianity. But a fair comparison would need to recognize the many instances, even within the past century, when Christianity has been used to support violence. In the United States, Christianity has been used to justify lynching, intimidation, and oppression of African Americans. In Northern Ireland, Christians were on both sides of a conflict that took many lives and terrorized a country. In South Africa, Christianity was used to justify the ideology and violence that buttressed the apartheid regime.

So I would argue that any discussion of concerns about instances of violence in Islam should also recognize the violence that has been all-too present in Christianity. And any discussion of Christianity’s emphasis on love and justice should look for similar emphases in Islam. Otherwise, we will be unfair and hypocritical in our engagement with our Muslim neighbors.

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This year marks the unfolding of a presidential campaign in the United States of America. Events of the day become a tweet on Twitter. The recent campaign reminds me of the title of an old Western movie, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. As you read that title, you may have images and stories of your own that fit these categories.

A tragedy occurs in San Bernardino, California and grief is amplified by fear, resulting in calls for closing the flow of immigrants and refugees by discriminating against those of Muslim faith. I wish I could say that I have seen evangelicals and other religious groups consistently providing a prophetic, compassionate witness; instead, I have heard and seen the good, the bad and the ugly from within the evangelical community.

One of the roots of what might be called “Islamophobia” is a lack of personal relationships and understanding with those of Muslim faith and as a result, a failure to distinguish the legitimate threat of terrorists from faithful Muslims. This failure to discern well leads to the labeling of persons and groups, which further distances Muslims and Christian communities.

If one of the root causes of indiscriminate fear is the lack of personal relationship and understanding, one of the key antidotes is for individuals and church communities to reach out and get to know persons of other faiths. One of the stories I still remember after 9/11 is of pastors who reached out to local mosques, which began a relationship journey. We live in a time where reaching out to others is vital if we are going to positively respond to the challenge of Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves.

While I have noted the opportunity for individual action, I want to also highlight institutional connections (such as church to mosque) that provide an umbrella of permission and encouragement for making personal connections. It is vital to do both movements—the individual and institutional—as they are reciprocal and will be generative of even more connections and opportunities.

One of the ways to create and sustain an atmosphere where we are challenged to think of biblical responses is to pray and return to biblical passages that emphasize welcoming the stranger and even the alien within our gates or our borders. Liturgies should reflect the context in which we now live.

Lastly, a significant barrier to developing relationships can be to focus on our differences in our conversations and relationships. Of course, there are differences between Muslims and Christians such as how we view the uniqueness and salvific centrality of Jesus Christ. At the same time, are we able to hold these distinctions in tension with clarity and charity in relation to those who are also “image-bearers” of God and are loved by Him?

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**THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY**

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**LOUIS SCHWEITZER**

(Continued from page 37)

Jouvenaux a désiré témoigner de leur foi à leurs amis musulmans dans le respect et le dialogue. Ils sont persuadés que, lorsqu’il s’agit d’une personne qui a elle-même des convictions religieuses, le seul témoignage possible est celui du dialogue qui respecte et écoute l’interlocuteur. Le chrétien cherche alors à comprendre la foi de la personne en face de lui et exprime la sienne avec la même liberté. Dans cette approche, le musulman est d’abord considéré comme un prochain à aimer, à respecter avant d’être un simple sujet à évangéliser.

Des associations qui œuvrent dans ce sens se développent de plus en plus, souvent animées par d’anciens musulmans devenus chrétiens. Mais si ce genre de témoignage a tendance à se développer, une attitude marquée par la peur de l’Islam semble majoritaire dans les milieux évangéliques français.

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A PENTECOSTAL TAKE ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

(Note: this response interacts with the Johnston and McAllister-Wilson papers included in this issue of the journal).

David L. Johnston and David McAllister-Wilson complement each other nicely. Johnston provides a helpful context for interpreting typical American perceptions of Muslims today. Admittedly, dubious political agendas, rampant eschatological speculation, and struggling ecclesial missions apparently have driven the general American perception of Islam far too much. Yet Johnston hopes that Christians and Muslims today can simultaneously maintain commitment to radical differences while affirming real common ground in efforts to work toward realistic understanding and cooperation. I heartily agree.

However, Johnston does not offer any suggestions about how to turn the Christian-Muslim relational tide in the United States in that much-to-be-desired direction. McAllister-Wilson focuses Evangelicals—uniquely poised out of our own sectarian pilgrimage—to lead the way in developmental relational progress between U.S. Christians and Muslims as humans-in-community. Moving from fearing and smearing the other to blind affection and infatuation should not set the norm. Healthy relationships require honest assessment, hard work, and humble commitment. Again, I heartily agree. However, McAllister-Wilson does not offer specific steps for pursuing that admirable objective.

As a Pentecostal Christian I closely identify with Evangelicalism. That is my frame of reference for saying that Islamophobia is by definition irrational, extreme, and unchristian. In a nation founded upon freedom of religion, it is also un-American. Given that, why are many of us so afraid of Islam?

Superficially, perhaps we are all-too-easily affected (or infected) by fear of the other—any other, whether of ethnicity, race, gender, ideology, religion, etc. To go a bit deeper, maybe we are afraid for the individual or societal survival of our culture and country. Moreover, perhaps we are afraid that Islam will challenge our own religious identity and integrity—which is why in my experience I have found Christians who are most secure in their faith to be least Islamaphobic. There are probably several other such fear factors contributing to rising Islamophobia.

Of course, there may be more than a little competitive rivalry between religions, including Christianity and Islam. That is natural enough. We “compete” for the same “resources,” namely and mainly people. But Islamophobia goes even further. It invokes fear and invites violence. Islamophobia is sinful. It is in the same category as racism and sexism—only, if possible, even more virulent. But from whence does it come?

Expulsion or banishment is at the core of the fallen human condition. Adam and Eve’s exile is decisive and definitive for us all. “Banished” (ṣālaḥ) is the same language used of Abraham’s action that “sends away” Ishmael and other possible rivals to Isaac (Gen 21:14; 25:6). It describes the scapegoat that is expelled from the camp of Israel (Lev 16:10). Still stronger is “drove” (gāraš) in Genesis 3:24, which also describes God’s exile of Cain (4:14) and Sarah’s charge to Abraham to “get rid” of the slave girl Hagar with her son (21:10). It is the language of divorce and dispossession (e.g., Ex 33:2; Deut 33:27).1 Is it some small coincidence that these incidents involve irrational fear and implacable strife against the other?

Perhaps deep in each human being resides an abominable instinct, arising out of fallen, sinful nature, which casts out and drives others away in twisted reenactment of their own haunting sense of exclusion, otherness, and alienation. Matthew’s Gospel teaches us that the danger of ultimate exclusion is not imaginary (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). But Jesus himself endured for us the darkness outside (22:53; 23:44; cp. Heb 13:11, 13) and now all may stand before an open gate (Rev 21:25). If incessant anxiety over our innate sense of separation from God and each other is our damnation, then there is salvation too. Thus I agree with Miroslav Volf in Exclusion and Embrace, on the essentiality of reconciliation for the reality of Christian salvation.

Exclusivist tendencies often stem from unconscious psychological and sociological concerns over one’s own ultimate exclusion or inclusion. One who has the prerogative and power to exclude others does not see him/herself present among the excluded. Thus irrational fears (or phobias) regarding alienation can sometimes lead people to form small, close-knit cults, such as the Branch Davidians, with disastrous consequences.2 Arguably, Islamophobia...
arises out of similar instincts spread still more broadly. However, putting oneself in the position of deciding who is or is not included or excluded involves sinful usurpation of divine sovereignty (1 Cor 5:12-13). Only God can make that call.

I now share a local example that demonstrates a concerted effort at confronting Islamophobia. It is only one potential avenue, and still inconclusive, but it has promise enough to supply a measure of instructive encouragement. My home state of Tennessee has become a hotbed for tensions with Muslims. A conflict over building an Islamic Center in Murfreesboro, which went all the way to the Supreme Court, received widespread attention. With the July 2015 Chattanooga shooting of military personnel in a “gun free zone” by a “lone wolf” homegrown Islamic terrorist, conditions became intolerably critical.

Accordingly, I reached out to the Muslim Community of Knoxville, receiving a prompt and gracious response. Individual meetings grew to include a group of local evangelical pastors and a few national leaders, as well as Imam Rafiq Mahdi. Next, Zaynab Ansari, a Muslim scholar, and I co-presented at “Our Muslim Neighbor Conference” in Nashville showcasing our joint endeavors. Still underway are interactive events, including visits to each others’ worship services as observers.

Subsequently, the Knoxville Women’s Interfaith Peace Initiative convened a clergy panel on “hot topics” related to interfaith relations. This panel consisted of a rabbi, an imam, and several pastors including a Lutheran, two Methodists, a Unitarian Universalist, and me, representing Church of God (Cleveland, TN). During our first meeting we were pressed to address the horrific terrorist attack by ISIS in Paris the previous Friday. The Muslims present soundly denounced the ISIS attack, labeling its perpetrators as violators of true Islam. Attendees identified economic, ethnic, geo-political, and religious factors as the sole or primary contributor to these atrocious acts. I argued that both causes and solutions of terrorism are complex and multifaceted. We struggled together to understand and respond to radicalized jihadist ideology and the despicable acts of its adherents. Together we faced our fear.

Recently, Religions for Peace USA Executive Director, Aaron Stauffer (also involved with the focus group), helped the Knoxville interfaith community begin a program called, “A Seat at the Table (ASATT).” Piloted in Nashville, ASATT, brings together people of different faiths for food, fellowship, and friendly conversation to promote a shared sense of community identity and solidarity. The program confronts Islamophobia in a straightforward manner. My congregation, New Harvest Church of God, along with Temple Beth El and Knoxville Jewish Alliance, Annoor Mosque and the Muslim Community of Knoxville as well as a few other churches, collaborated.

Local experience with interfaith work indicates that Islamophobia is present, to varying degrees, in the Knoxville community including among some churches and clergy. With Johnston, I attribute this unfortunate reality to various factors, including the current geopolitical events as well as different religious backgrounds. Generally speaking, those who are more politically conservative and/or religiously fundamentalist appear most susceptible. Like McAllister-Wilson, I find that building real relationships works wonders. Many people do not personally know any American Muslims. Negative impressions of Muslims are often shaped primarily by the media or by international experiences—as in mission work or military service—in essentially hostile, unstable environments. Getting acquainted on a personal level with everyday normal Muslim neighbors here in the U.S. helps immensely.

Finally, I am convinced that the liberal tendency (in both its political and religious forms) to deny or downplay the danger from radical Islamic extremists inevitably fuels Islamophobia. People no longer trust anyone who denies the existence of a patently obvious danger. It provides fertile soil for outrageous conspiracy theories to grow like weeds out of control. It is better to concede the danger realistically in tandem with constructing cooperative partnerships with mainstream Muslims in order to combat radical Islamic extremists who have turned to terrorism. Yes, evangelicals are uniquely poised to lead the way. Let us count the cost and respond with courage and commitment (Luke 14:28-30)!

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Before September 11, 2001, the consciousness of most French evangelicals concerning Islam was limited to a socio-religious reality: the majority religion was Roman Catholicism, and like French evangelicals, Muslims in France were also a religious minority (Muslims being more numerous). Post-9/11 events have of course changed that perspective drastically, by bringing Islamic realities and epiphenomena to the forefront of public consciousness, for the general French public as well as for French evangelicals. This shift in perspective is not, of course, limited to France, but generally true in the non-Muslim world.

At the outset, let us point out that anti-religious “phobia” is not limited to Islam. In 2015, according to French sociologist Sébastien Fath (who is also an evangelical), government statistics show a 20 percent increase in acts perpetrated against Christian worship sites and cemeteries and a tripling of Islamophobic acts. A 5 percent decrease in anti-Semitic acts was noted, but the Jewish community paid the highest price because of their smaller population, respectively. The remarkable increase of Islamophobic acts coupled with a significant growth in anti-Christian pillage seems to indicate that intolerance of religion in France is on the rise.1

As a Franco-American, my own perspective has been enriched by meeting French Muslims and Muslim-background evangelicals, but also fundamentally influenced by 15 years of life and ministry in Lebanon. Before moving to Beirut, I had a relatively “typical” evangelical outlook on Islam—seeing it from afar, looking at it from outside its regions of origin and meagerly understanding its nature and complexities. Seeing Islam from within the Arab world profoundly changed my outlook and understanding of Muslim peoples, as well the realities and content of Islamic faith.

French Evangelical Attitudes toward Islam

The responses of the rank and file of French evangelicals to Islamophobia are summarized by Franco-Moroccan pastor Saïd Oujibou in his open letter to pastors, imams and friends, Islamisme, islamophobie et islamofolie.2 Written in the wake of the attacks on the French satiric publication Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, Oujibou notes two temptations on the part of French evangelicals: 1) unwittingly feeding the ambient fear of Islam and Muslims fueled by the attacks on France; 2) retreating into the protective cocoon of their communities, thus neglecting an active public presence and relationships of solidarity with Islam and with Muslims. Oujibou does not minimize the challenges that Islam and Islamism represent today; in fact, he has very tough words for the religion of his childhood and youth, for he sees within Islam itself the seeds of the violence propagated by its extremist elements.

What, then, is the solution? Oujibou develops several themes, including “encouraging Muslims toward a critical re-appropriation of the Qu’ran.” He argues that French evangelicals need to understand the mechanisms of Islamist radicalization and the seductive power of its ideology, heightened by its current incarnation in Daech (ISIS) and its dream of a caliphate. But, beyond understanding the phenomenon, Oujibou exhorts French evangelicals to leave their isolation and develop close contact and relationship with Muslims. Here, he says, is a fascinating context for practicing non-violence and forgiveness as well as a unique opportunity for French evangelicals to be “salt and light.” In addition to increased contacts
with Muslims, they training is necessary to raise the quality of their witness evidenced by the need understand certain cultural and religious codes. Moreover, the common public amalgamation of Islam with Islamism, called “islamo-folly” by Oujibou, must be rejected by French evangelicals, for it will only serve to exacerbate the widespread fear factor and impede evangelicals in their desire for authentic witness toward Muslims. It is appropriate for evangelicals to express their fears, to formulate them and objectify them, so that the community might be able to deal with them appropriately.

A Biblical Way Forward

In looking for solutions, we turn to the biblical text. The Apostle Peter presents a way forward in chapter three of his first letter (1 Peter 3: 13-17), which can be summarized in four words: consecration, preparation, sensitivity and integrity. The prerequisite to witness in an adversarial or hostile context is the centrality of Christ to the totality of our lives. Such consecration paves the way for appropriate preparation, in this case, for witness to Muslims (i.e. understanding Islam, understanding its cultures and codes, answering objections, helping Muslims encounter Jesus etc.) that will help evangelicals be more relaxed in their rapport with Muslims. Christian apologia has sensitivity as its core underpinning (“... with gentleness and respect,” verse 3:15b). Such sensitivity implies meaningful relationship and it is highly likely that nothing of lasting effect in Muslim-Christian dialogue will be achieved without it. Last but not least is integrity, which substantiates the credibility of evangelical witness, whether on a personal or ecclesial level. Without it, why would Muslims even begin to listen to us? I believe that the practice of these four values in our relationships and our witness to Muslims will go far in addressing the barriers that impede the witness of the French evangelical community to Muslims.

Co-founding Editor Takes Position at Calvin Theological Seminary

Six years ago, Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue journal began publication. From its inception the journal has sought to bridge the gap between academics and practitioners, pioneering new paths in interfaith engagement and the broader evangelical church. During these six years the journal has deepened in its commitment to this evangelical and catholic (ecumenical) vision by focusing on context-specific experiences from authors in six continents.

One of the leading voices of influence of this vision is that of Richard J. Mouw, President Emeritus of Fuller Theological Seminary. Mouw’s model of convicted civility is deeply rooted in his Reformed and evangelical commitments to the gospel of Jesus. Cory Wilson, one of the co-editors of this journal, studied with Mouw the past several years and shares his commitment to the Reformed tradition. In July of 2015 Cory received a call to join Calvin Theological Seminary as the Jake and Betsy Tuls Assistant Professor of Missiology and Missional Ministry. Speaking of his call to Calvin Seminary Willson remarked:

“It is a tremendous privilege to be a part of this Reformed community especially during this moment in history. As our forbearers have done we need to look to Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for what God is doing in the world today and how the Church should respond. Being called to an institution with a rich theological tradition that is seeking to learn from and dialogue with all parts of the global church is exciting and humbling. I cannot think of a more challenging and important work than helping facilitate this exchange between cultures and Christian traditions. In my first year at Calvin Seminary I have been enriched by the stories and experiences of my students from very different contexts as we seek together to be faithful followers of Jesus and attentive to the Holy Spirit’s work in the Word and the world.”

With this new role a way has opened for collaboration between Fuller Theological Seminary and Calvin Seminary in the work of this journal. In keeping with the context-specific focus, the journal will now include the challenges and opportunities encountered by church communities served by both seminaries around the world.

A French-American of Lebanese origin, Paul Sanders earned degrees in history and theology in Oregon, USA and the Doctorat in modern Western history at the Université de Paris-Sorbonne. He has served theological schools in France and Lebanon, and with various international networks of theological institutions in Europe, the Middle East and globally. He currently lives and works from Nantes, in western France.
The Silence of ‘Others’

On the front cover, Amina Demir, performs the 1700% poem at the School of Art Institute of Chicago’s Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, Illinois. The 1700% Project, founded by Anida Yoeu Ali, is conceived as a collaborative project utilizing art as intervention. Specifically, the 1700% Project strategically intervenes against the racial profiling and rise of violence and hate directed at Muslims in a post 9/11 era. The project challenges monolithic stereotypes of a “Muslim” identity while acknowledging the significance of historical persecution. The number 1700% refers to the exponential percentage increase of hate crimes against Arabs, Muslims and those perceived to be Arab or Muslim since the events of September 11, 2001.

The poem Demir performs is a cento (100 lines of found writings) based on filed reports of hate and bias crimes against Arabs and Muslims since 9/11.

On the back cover, Choudhary captures a picture from Amina Demir’s life. She and her younger sister were in their car in Bridgeview, Illinois, when a middle-aged Caucasian male in a car next to them shouted, “sand n*****”, and drove away. Amina followed his car, got his license plate number, and reported him to the police. A local court later sentenced the man to 150 hours of community service.

For more on the 1700% Project, see https://1700percentproject.wordpress.com/about/.

About Artist

Bharat Choudhary is an Indian-British photographer based in Geneva, Switzerland. For five years he worked on several rural development projects with CARE International in India. He later took up photography and was mentored by Raghu Rai (Magnum Photos) in New Delhi. He received the Ford Foundation International Fellowship to study at the University of Missouri, USA, where he graduated with a MA in Photojournalism in 2010. He has received many awards including the Alexia Foundation Professional Grant and the Getty Images Grant for Editorial Photography. He was a jury member for the 9th China International Press Photo Competition. His work has been published in TIME, NY Times, International Herald Tribune, The National, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, La Repubblica, Philosophie, Sunday Times Magazine, and The Sunday Guardian including others.