

FCNL Friends Committee on National Legislation
An Epistle Encouraging Quaker Engagement with American Muslims

We have inherited a large house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together—black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Moslem and Hindu—a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.

Martin Luther King, Jr., 1964

We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning, keeping in mind what has been written....

Koran... 'we have made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another' Talmud... 'the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace'..... Bible... 'Blessed are the peacemakers'...

President Barack Obama, Cairo, June 3, 2009

Greetings to Friends:

As Quakers we are called to "answer that of God in everyone." Our work begins with ourselves and our own country. This work must include our embrace of the "other," in order to replace "tolerance" with understanding, respect, and sustained collaboration on issues of mutual concern. Especially since September 11, 2001, American Muslims have been wrongly stereotyped as foreigners, unbelievers, and terrorist-sympathizers.

The Christian roots of Quakerism bring us Jesus' answer to "Who is my neighbor?" in his parable of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10:35-37]. Paul heard this message and worked to open the community of believers to the "other," regardless of ethnicity, status, or gender. [Gal. 3:28]. Many Quakers have extended their hands to the "other" over the centuries.

If we stand together to practice equality and justice, we can enhance our understanding of American Muslims and theirs of us and raise American Muslim visibility in a positive way, which is of special importance to Muslim youth. This would encourage similar efforts by others, help amplify

American Muslim voices, and make our education of the public and policy advocacy more effective.

Intercultural teamwork will not just happen. It requires intentional and coordinated programs and policies to extend ourselves as Quakers and as Americans to our American Muslim sisters and brothers. Some Quaker groups have attempted to respond, especially since September 11, 2001, to local calls for support by Muslims. Many Muslim organizations voice readiness to engage with us on education of the public, civil liberties, political participation, meeting human needs, and conflict resolution in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world. FCNL staff have cultivated increased interfaith contacts in its work on civil liberties, nuclear disarmament, immigration, and peaceful prevention of deadly conflict. Together we can build on this good work.

Accordingly, FCNL:

- Commits to continue seeking out and engaging with American Muslim secular and religious organizations on issues of mutual concern.
- Encourages other Quaker organizations, Meetings, churches, and individuals to consider similar bridge-building for fellowship, joint service, and advocacy work as they discern openings.
- Invites Quaker organizations to share their past and evolving experiences and "lessons learned" with other Quaker organizations, and learn from them and our non-Quaker counterparts.

**This epistle was approved by the FCNL General Committee
at Annual Meeting in November, 2009.**

**Indiana Yearly Meeting 2009-2010 appointed
representatives to the FCNL General Committee:**

**Pam Ferguson
Noell Krughoff**

**Tom Krughoff
Chris Sitler**

**Ron Ferguson
Welling Hall**