

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A Voice for Ecumenical Congregations and Christians Around the World

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Ask Me About the I.C.C.C. A Button and an Opportunity



All attendees at the Annual Conference will receive a button with the legend "Ask Me About the ICC!" What does this button mean?

The ICC? Is it the Internet Crime Complaint Center? Is it the International Council of Corvette Clubs? Is it the stock market symbol for the ImmuCell Corporation? It could be any of those things, but when you and I use the letters, the ICC is us! Wear your button daily, and then be prepared to answer the question when it's asked.

The ICC is the visible face of the community church movement. The ICC stands for unity without uniformity; diversity without division. The ICC is post-denominational, leaving behind vertical power structures for horizontal relationship-building. The ICC is churches and ministry centers on five continents, witnessing to Christian unity. The ICC is our congregation linking hands with yours in Christian love. The ICC is the most racially diverse Christian communion on the planet. The ICC is a fellowship with a vision that by God's grace all Christians can and will find unity. The ICC is people:loving, serving, witnessing, caring in the name of Jesus.

What will you say when others ask you about the ICC? Develop an "elevator speech" about the Council. An elevator speech is a compelling description of the Council, brief enough that all of the speech can be shared before the elevator reaches the fourth floor.

Wear your button joyfully! Answer the questions faithfully! Share a word about the ICC wisely! Develop your elevator speech prayerfully!

Annual Conference Checklist

Have you done the following yet?

- Sent in your registration form and fee?
- Called the Embassy Suites Hotel and made your reservations? 800/220-9219
Deadline June 19th.
- Made your meal reservations (optional) with the Council office?
- Signed up for the Supper Club (optional)?
- Contacted the office about volunteering at conference? Sunday morning registration is still needed.
- Sent in or talked to your church about sending their Voting Delegate form?

If you need more information, please contact the Council office.

More Conference Happenings

You can be on this year's Annual Conference program! Immediately following Monday's Welcome Luncheon there is time set aside for you! During an hour-long "Listening to Our Voices" plenary July 13th, you will have the opportunity to report on what you and your church or ministry center have been doing, the challenges you have faced and overcome, and your hopes for the future. To seize the day and your place in it, send an email to VP for Planning Harry Foockle at, harryf@acckc.org. To accommodate as many presenters as possible, each presentation is strictly limited to ten minutes. It's first come, first served until all the available minutes are taken. Let's hear from you!

Don't forget to reserve your Welcome Luncheon ticket! Only a limited quantity will be on hand at registration.

Don't miss the Koinonia Luncheon Tuesday, July 14th!

"The Glory of God is the human person fully alive."

~St. Irenaeus, 2nd century ce

Executive Director, Dave Sanders and Pastoral Director, Chris Hopkins, share what it is like to administer and serve a unique spiritual community called The Center in Palos Park, IL. The Center was founded by a Methodist minister in 1932 and continues to offer what every church offers: chapel services, pastoral ministries, and fellowship through the Wayside Chapel. Yet knowing that a human person needs more, The Center has expanded to include a long term recovery program for men with addictions, a working farm, summer camps, art programs and a nature based school. Hospitality, compassion, creativity and our relationship with God and Earth are key values in the day-to-day workings of The Center.



Please join us at the Koinonia Luncheon (optional with fee) to hear more of this unique way of being church.

The International Council of Community Churches is grateful for the following 2014 Annual Conference Sponsors for their investment in the community church movement:

We-Mac Manufacturing Company, Kansas City, MO
Antioch Community Church, Kansas City, MO
The Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board, New York, NY

We thank you for your financial support of a conference program.

Mission Statement



"As people devoted to following Christ we are committed to community, to treasuring diversity, to living our faith in service and love."

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A Voice for
Ecumenical Congregations
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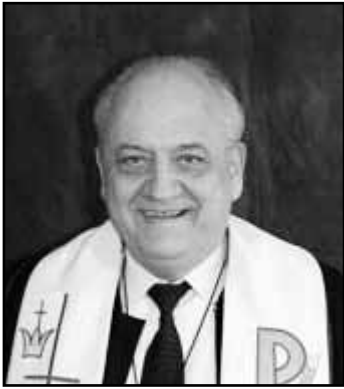
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AVOIDING EUTHANASIA? (pt. 2)

*Behold, I make all things new... To the thirsty I will give water without price...
[excerpts from Revelation 21:5-6]*

President's Message Rev. Dr. Richard O. Griffith

We have made the commitment to be a community of Inclusion, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, black, white, pink, purple, gay, straight, young, old, liberal, conservative, angel or adversary, but while we all strive to become one in Christ Jesus, some of our ministries do not seem to be working as well as we would like. What should we do? How can we make real the promise of Scripture, "Behold, I make all things new" and "To the thirsty I will give water without price."?

I suggest we look at Investigation, Action, Analysis, and Accountability.

Investigation

When ministry is not having the results we had hoped, "What happened?" "Why?" are the questions we ask. I believe our responses need to be as "data driven" as possible. Let's use the issue of worship attendance. Some of the questions might include who is attending and when; the ages of attendees; the attendance patterns of "younger" people. I believe another reflection needs to be "What are the (spiritual) needs [if any] of the people we're attempting to attract, especially as they perceive them?" And, how can we get the honest information we need?

We may find the answers difficult to receive and accept. But as one of the gurus in Organizational Development has written, "The truth is always friendly." (It doesn't always make us happy, though.) Only the truth, (valid data) in whatever form, can be the basis of planning and implementing any kind of effective ministry.

Action

It has been said, "Those who fail to plan,

plan to fail." It also is true, however, that detailed plans exponentially improve the possibilities of success. In detail, based on valid data, we need to decide: "What is going to be done, when, how, and by whom?"

Analysis

What did the data tell us? What worked? What didn't work? Why? (No blaming / scapegoating) What did we learn? What changes / improvements might be possible? How will we do it (or something else) better next time?

Accountability

This is where I, and a number of people, find it easy to fail. It is not comfortable to say, "Matilda, how is it going? I know you were going to get (x) done (by next week) (a week ago). And then, if there are issues (of whatever nature) asking, "How can I (or others) help?" My experience is that if this is done routinely, with everyone, especially if agreed upon in advance, it does not need to feel punitive, and, in fact, empowers productivity and accomplishment.

Finally

As the liturgy says, "The Church is of God, and will be preserved to the end of time for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments." Lead by the Spirit, core values, common sense, and pertinent planning, this will be true, and euthanasia, even inadvertent, will not be the outcome.

In faith and optimism,

Dick

A Call to Pray!

For all those who wish to join us in fervent prayer please call 605-562-0020 ID number 378277696 on the following dates in your respective time zones. Pacific Time is 5 pm; Mountain Time is 6 pm; Central Time is 7 pm; and Eastern Time is 8 pm.

During our prayer phone conferences I look forward to hearing your praise reports (answered prayer) as well as prayer request. Let us never forget that God still answers prayer and tell Him "Thank You".

June 8, 2015

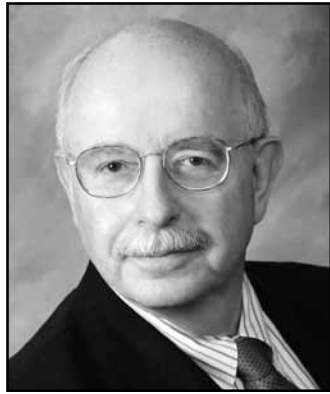
Scripture Focus— "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:38)

Prayer Focus—All family members of God be filled with flowing rivers

Sis. Shyreece Pompey
ICCC/WCF Spiritual Leader

A Time to Laugh





Let's Talk About Money

Don Ashmall
Council Minister

As individuals we are created with souls. As congregations we are spiritual fellowships. But we live in a material world and that means, among other things, money. So let's talk about money. Money exists in three dimensions: the past, the present and the future. Taking them in turn:

The Past

We have all made choices in our lives. Some of the choices were good, and some not-so-good. Some of us decided at one point or another to purchase a house in which to live. That was good in that we didn't give money to a landlord month after month, with nothing to show for it after years and years. And making that choice was probably better than deciding to camp under a bridge for the foreseeable future. But the decision was not all good: it put us in thrall to a financial institution for up to thirty years. And that can wear on the soul. We've made other choices too. Some choices were made on impulse, and those choices rarely turned out to be as positive as we thought at the time. Whatever the choices may be, we now have to live with and within the consequences. The one really good thing about past money is that we can learn from the choices we've made, and from what we've learned we can make better choices for the present and future.

The Present

Today we have budgets. Or maybe we don't. If we don't have budgets, we should have. Today we dedicate a tithe to the work of Christ in the world. Or maybe we don't. If we aren't at least moving towards a tithe we ought to be. And that's possible only with a budget. Beyond our giving to our local church, we need to consider the work of the community church movement. If you are living hand-to-mouth with no resources beyond those needed for survival, skip now to the next paragraph. Otherwise, think for a moment about the cost of a hamburger

and a soft drink. Or think about some other occasional snack you buy for home or for out and about. If you're like many of us, you indulge yourself at least once a week. If you're spending less than \$5 each week on that indulgence, you're in the minority! What if instead of buying a hamburger, you invested that \$5 each week in the work of justice, reconciliation and Christian unity? Phone the Council office. Speak with DeAnn to set up an automatic investment in the Council from your credit or debit card each week. Perhaps it will be for \$5 per week, or \$10, or maybe more. Investing in the Council is a good choice. And you can increase, decrease or cancel your instructions at any time, so it's a choice that's much more flexible than the one you made about your mortgage!

The Future

For those who have not yet received the word: you are going to die. That's one hundred percent, no questions asked, guaranteed. It may not be soon, but it will happen eventually. And here's another fact: at least financially speaking, most of us are worth more dead than we are alive. Add up mortgage insurance, life insurance, the residual values of various pension plans, the accumulated value of all the "stuff" we own and more, and what many of us will be leaving behind will be more than we imagined.

And here are two more facts: first, you really can't take it with you; and second, if you don't do some estate planning and designate where your material belongings will go after you're "gone," the state in which you die has already completed a last will and testament for you. The decisions they've already made for you may not be those you would approve. But unless you've completed your own will or trust, it will be too late to change the state's decisions the very second that you die.

Speaking of wills: a will is your last chance to tithe. Okay, you always wanted to tithe. But maybe somehow you never got to that point during your lifetime. A will in which you designate ten or more percent of your worldly goods for the work of Jesus will be a permanent witness when you aren't in the world any more. If your estate is small, the witness may be in one-time gifts to your local church, to the work of the community church movement, and/or to other ecumenical mission agencies.

If you have been financially blessed during your lifetime, you may want to establish endowment funds. These are gifts whose basic value (principal) will never be diminished, and which generate income that will be used for Christian work every year, indefinitely. Your local church may have established policies and procedures to handle endowment gifts. If your church has not yet taken such steps, encourage your church's financial officers to contact me; I can provide some thoughts and possible contacts for them to consider. The Council has provided an opportunity for endowment gifts; gifts of size may be named in your memory and/or the memory of loved ones.

Past, Present and Future

In the end, our money and our worldly goods aren't ours. We are stewards – caretakers – of the "stuff" of this world. And our stewardship is temporary and temporal. So how we handle our money is a matter of eternity as well as of the past, present and future of this world. As stewards, we want to be responsible in our stewardship, using our "stuff" in our care for others. And we want to be eternally responsible, devoting an appropriate amount to what lasts beyond time and into eternity. After all, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

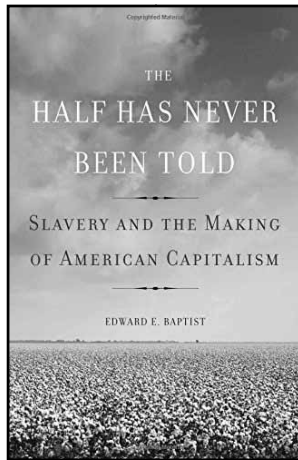
REVIEWS

Dr. Robert M. Puckett



THE HALF HAS NEVER BEEN TOLD:
Slavery and the making of American Capitalism;
Edward E. Baptist, Basic Books, 2014,
hardback, 420 pages, \$35.

The Half Has Never Been Told is the story of slavery and racism's impact upon American economic, cultural and political history from the colonial period to the present. It is a story told in all its dark and painful detail by Edward E. Baptist who teaches history at Cornell University. It reveals how the expansion of slavery in the eight decades after American independence became the backbone of economic development and modernization. The production of tobacco, sugar, and cotton was the basis upon which American capitalism was built. As the nation grew beyond the original colonies, innovative ways to make slavery more profitable led to forced migration and torture by slave owners to increase efficiency from enslaved African Americans in the new territories. Cotton became the most important raw material in the world market upon which the wealth and global influence of the nation was built.



This book tells the truth about the relationship of slavery to American capitalism and contemporary issues of race and democracy. Historians have tried to whitewash the story of slavery with romantic tales about the Antebellum South. They have tried to make "America's modernization about entrepreneurs, creativity, invention, markets, movement, and change." They tried to claim that "Slavery was not about any of these things--not about slave trading, or moving people away from everyone

they knew in order to make cotton. Therefore, modern America and slavery had nothing to do with each other."

But the words of former slaves tell a different story. "They sold slaves here and everywhere. I've seen droves of Negroes brought in here on foot going South to be sold. Each one of them had an old two sack on his back with everything he's got in it. Over the hills they came in lines reaching as far as the eye can see. They walked in double lines chained together by twos. They walk 'em here to the railroad and shipped 'em south like cattle...the half has never been told."

This is the story of how "slavery's expansion shaped every crucial aspect of the economy and politics of the new nation" (P. xxi) from the signing of the declaration of independence to the Civil War. It reveals the degree to which the war was primarily about slavery and not about states rights as some continue to claim. It is the story of Southern slave owners who borrowed money from Northern banks equally involving both North and South in the slavery system.

Beginning in the 1780's the Constitution's compromises built a union on slavery and economic production by slave labor camps. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison framed the Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom, the law that prohibited established churches,

but did not consider it immoral to keep the bodies of some men and women unfree. The supreme court even declared that African American were only 3/5 human.

Most signers of the Declaration of Independence were slave owners as were presidents from George Washington to Abraham Lincoln with the exception of John Adams and John Quincy Adam.

Efforts on the part of slave holders to extend slavery to all western expansion led to the election of Lincoln who declared "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." He insisted that the union cannot "endure permanently half slave and half free...it will become one thing or the other." He warned that the slavery-expansionist politicians would try to "turn the entire United States into slave territory. This would limit all American rights, making people in the free states as subservient to the thought-policing of proslavery orthodoxy as those in the South." (p. 382) Instead, he appealed to the better angels of our nature to live up and protect the freedom of all rather than the powerful few.

The war that was fought over the issue of slavery cost the lives of over 700,000 people. The legacy of slavery continues to plague our nation. Racism continues to divide us. It is time to honestly face up to the terrible moral as well as economic cost it has fostered. Failure to recognize the negative impact of racism upon our history deprives one of a vision of and commitment to our true greatness.

Ecumenews

by Herman Harmelink, III
VP for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations



own tradition. One Christian minister identified himself as a Buddhist Christian because of a transforming experience he had at a silent Buddhist retreat.

On the other hand, it was acknowledged that many people from missionary situations wanted a complete break with their past connection, or were unable to maintain it because of hostility from those in the former religion. It was also recognized that in particular cases, such as interfaith marriages for people of Jewish

Recently a woman at our church said to me: "You won't be seeing me around here anymore because I've become a Buddhist." I said to her: "You could be a Buddhist Christian, or a Christian Buddhist. You don't have to give up one for the other." Little did I know that I would shortly be invited to a World Council of Churches Consultation on Exploring Religious Hybridity (or, in other words, multiple religious affiliations). There were presentations from American and Canadian sources as

"You won't be seeing me around here anymore because I've become a Buddhist." I said to her: "You could be a Buddhist Christian, or a Christian Buddhist."

well as from Asian and European ones. Some spoke for indigenous people from First Nations groups (Canadian-speak for American Indian), where Canadian government and church efforts were made to assimilate people from native tribes into the dominant culture, but at the cost of alienating them from their own culture and identify. A theologian from Korea spoke of how the missionaries had made converts give up their Confucian roots, again denying them what was their authentic cultural inheritance. Hyphenated religion is found in countless homes around the world where there have been marriages between partners of different religions. Their children, in the best situations, gain an appreciation for both religious traditions represented by their parents; in other situations, the children may end up confused or alienated from all religion. Others have taken on additional religious loyalties because of aspects of another faith that have a special appeal for them, even though similar aspects may exist to some degree in their

background, there is a concern that assimilation could lead to the eventual disappearance of their faith. As a result, many rabbis will not perform interfaith marriages.

Yet another concern could be identified: those who take seriously the traditionally exclusive claims of Christianity, especially for people who have a conservative interpretation of the Scriptures. They might also express a concern that divided loyalties could lead to relativism or syncretism, a readiness to consider all faiths as essentially the same.

It is clear that this consultation opens the discussion for a new level of interfaith dialogue and understanding. The last word on the subject, if it ever comes, is far in the distant future. Meanwhile, we are given the opportunity to ponder what kind of challenges multiple religious affiliations make for our own faith, and for the wider community of our congregations and our communion.

Even After I Die

by Rev. Jeff Stinehelfer,
Palisades Community Church
(Endowment Fund Trustee).

As in every other household, we are inundated with invitations to support this or that charity, some of which we do. However, perhaps like you, there are a few causes that are especially dear to our hearts. Recently I decided to include two such entities in the list of beneficiaries of a life insurance policy, though they also benefit from our regular giving on an annual basis. Now these two causes will receive our support even after I die!

The "ICCC Permanent Endowment Fund" provides this kind of opportunity for those of us who value the ministry of the International Council of Community Churches. A "planned gift" can help provide a solid financial base for the ICCC, and ongoing support for our shared ecumenical mission to foster Christian unity. Designations of legal wills, life insurance policies, annuities, trusts, tangible property, and other assets are among the ways to make a planned gift. Many "Guardian Angels" have done so for the ICCC.

You are invited to prayerfully consider leaving such a legacy to the ICCC, "even after you die!" Documents to make a formal agreement are available at www.icccusa.com, or from the Endowment Fund Trustees, or by contacting the ICCC office at 21116 Washington Parkway, Frankfort, IL 60423 (815-464-5690).

**The ICCC's Facebook page
is open to you!**

Join the group, learn what's happening around the Council, and post notices and photos of your church's exciting ministries!



Sharing Joys:

- **Rev. Dr. Marilyn Rossner** prepares for the SSF-IIIHS 40th Conference being held (**Spiritual Science Fellowship International Institute of Integral Human Science**, Canada) August 14-23 in Montreal. Information can be found on their website iiihs.org.
- **Rev. Keith Haverkamp** sends a daily morning prayer though NRF (Norris Religious Fellowship) Simplelists Message Board. If you'd like to sign up, visit the church's website www.norrisrf.org.
- **Nancy & Ken White, Greendale People's Church**, Worcester, MA as they celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary March 29th.




Congratulations to....

- **Dale L. Hopely, Jr.**, Senior Pastor at **The Church at Litchfield Park**, AZ who celebrated his 10 year anniversary with the church May 3rd!
- **Rev. Dr. Perry McCallen** who has been called as Senior Pastor of the **Community Church at Tellico Village**, TN. Welcome!
- **Rev. Charles Edward Clark, Jr.**, who is the new Senior Minister of **People's Community Church**, Detroit, MI. Rev. Clark was installed on April 26th. Welcome!
- **Rev. Dr. Alex McLean**, the new Senior Pastor at **New Covenant Community Church** in Akron, OH. Welcome!
- **Rev. Dr. Ken Gill**, who will be installed as Senior Pastor of **Emmanuel Baptist Church**, Ridgewood, NJ on June 7th. Ken formerly served at ICCC member church **Longboat Island Chapel**, FL. Welcome back!

Our prayers are with:

- **Ann Nester, Community Church at Tellico Village**, TN, who fell in January and broke her hip. After three months of inpatient rehab and care, she is now at home. She has begun outpatient therapy and regrets she will not be healthy enough to come to Annual Conference.
- **Rev. Father Barry Lillis, Orthodox Catholic Church of America**, who is recovering from a lengthy illness.
- **James Ross**, father of **Chaplain Derek Ross**, who passed away April 26th.
- **Joshua Ringo**, son of **Chaplain Ron Ringo**, who passed away April 26th.
- **Douglas Memorial Church**, Baltimore, MD, and **Rev. Sheridan Todd Yeary** Pastor, leading efforts to bring healing and hope to Baltimore.





International Council of Community Churches

Liberia-ICCC-Liberia
Email: cnahogaye@yahoo.com
Cell#: 0777200006

May 18, 2015

Rev. Donald H. Ashmall
Council Minister
International Council of Community Churches (ICCC)
U.S.A.

Dear Rev. Ashmall:

Please accept my greetings and sincere best wishes in the name of our soon-coming Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.


On behalf of the ICCC Liberia-Chapter, I extend to you my profound and heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your prayers with us during Liberia's dark days of Ebola, and most especially for your financial contribution of US\$875 in our hour of great need.

I must strongly indicate here that your financial assistance enabled us to purchase food items and several Ebola prevention materials that helped to keep us safe, resulting in no loss of life to Ebola among our membership.

Thanks once again for the concern of this noble organization for its members in Liberia, and we look forward to seeing you at your upcoming annual conference.

Kind regards,

Yours truly,



Charles G. Gaye, Jr. (Bishop)
PRESIDENT, ICCC-LIBERIA CHAPTER

Seeking a Senior Pastor

Cosmopolitan Community Church is actively seeking and accepting resumes for the position of Pastor.

They are a historic church established in 1923 under the leadership of the late Dr. John Russell Harvey. The church has been led by three outstanding spiritual leaders: the late Dr. John Russell Harvey (1923-1932), the late Dr. Mary G. Evans (1932-1966), and Rev. Dr. Henry O. Hardy (1967- retirement, December 2014).

Cosmopolitan has consistently been a pillar in the urban landscape for over 90 years. The church has historically been involved in the spiritual growth and civic development of the local community. They are searching for a Senior Pastor with the passion and creativity to get them growing in both numbers and impact. They look forward to what God has planned for them next.

Interested candidates should mail resumes to:

Cosmopolitan Community Church
P. O. Box 805771
Chicago, IL 60680
Attn: Pastoral Search Committee

Seeking an Associate Pastor

The Church at Litchfield Park, a historic and dynamic independent community church located in a beautiful resort community west of Phoenix, is searching for an Associate Pastor to join our wonderful staff. A qualified candidate should have a theological degree from an accredited institution, be ordained by a Christian denomination and have a servant's heart manifested in the pastoral gifts. Specific areas of ministry will include: visitation, counseling, teaching, and occasional preaching. CLP is a progressive church "aspiring to be as inclusive as the love of God." Qualified candidates should email a resume and cover letter to: info@churchatlitchfieldpark.org with "Associate Pastor Search" in the subject line.

Interfaith News

*Submitted by Herman Harmelink III,
Vice-President for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations*

Strictly speaking, this is not ecumenews but rather interfaith news. A couple of years ago our Ecumenical Relations Commission was expanded to be a Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. As a part of this enlarged responsibility, I was part of the National Council of Churches' commission on interfaith relations. An initiative by the National Council of Churches led in late March to the first meeting of the National Muslim-Christian Initiative, held in New York City. Present were representatives of most member communions of the NCC, along with heads of organizations belonging to the newly-established Council of Moslem Organizations in North America. The two-day gathering had a tightly-organized agenda, with addresses on a number of topics by representatives of both faiths. It would take too long to list all of the topics, but here are a couple of representative ones: Bigotry and Hate Crimes in the US; Religious Extremist Ideology Abroad. One could not help but be impressed by the high quality of Muslim leadership at this meeting, and the thoughtfulness with which they addressed all topics. Recognizing that both Christians and Muslims have been victims of hate crimes here and abroad, both faith representatives joining in calling for respect and tolerance for all faiths and for people of no faith. As one Moslem scholar pointed out, the Koran makes clear that God wanted diversity or he would not have created diversity, and thus any attempt to forcibly convert people would be to go against God's creative work. What is not widely known is that the Council of Moslem Organizations has issued a point-by-point refutation of claims by the "Islamic State" that their actions in any way represent the Muslim faith. Sadly the American media are not interested in such stories, preferring to focus on terrorist actions.

One of the hopes expressed by the representatives of both faiths is that we might be able to speak and act together on a large number of subjects, and also engage in joint projects in aid of the poor, the suffering, and the dispossessed in our own country and abroad. I came away from the meeting impressed with the openness of the Islamic representatives, and their desire to stand with Christians in areas of human values, respect and integrity which are important for all people of faith.