

HARVEST OF CIRCLES OF INQUIRY: ANNUAL GATHERING 2016—ISLAM

Question 2: Share an experience you have had with a Muslim or with Islam

Group #1

Facilitator—Carl Cordes

Recorder—Jenny Wade

--went to Ramadan ending celebration—interesting—Imam ????? --service and food were amazing

--hospital ?????? training—supervisor was a young Muslim by conversion—took mysticism out—gentle, kind and soft –spoken—spiritual –helped me understand the wisdom

--stationed in Turkey—visited many facilities—not all Muslims are the same –some Turks are more secular, some more mystic—Don't compare religion with culture

--as a teacher need to be attentive during fast season—took class on basic Islam for context.—Hafid—has memorized Koran/Quran—many US Muslims were in class to learn their faith tradition—waitress told she shouldn't be serving alcohol if observant of Muslim tradition

--interrupted couple, told male to tell female he was married. Male said he could have 2 wives anyway – female not happy, shocked

--bought computers—one assistant at the store Staples would not allow him to use his actual name which was more Muslim

--Interfaith conversation with a Muslim

--church was used by Muslims for Friday prayer service

--After 9/11 had an interfaith study group

--no distinct story—many coworkers Muslim in past job—no potlucks during Ramadan—one coworker took a copy of a minister's stole and had 2 new stoles made—part of arranged marriage—interesting conversation

Group #2

Facilitator—Nancy McKee-Jolda

Recorder—Jennifer Earle

--one daughter lives in East Oakland, met a person covered in robes—granddaughter of one-and-a-half years old with her. Grandmother and woman enrobed smiled at each other

--interfaith council—Muslim representatives as open and congenial as all others—invited to mosque for a visit

--ready smiles—foreign exchange student from Turkey was a Muslim and lived with us—Islamic center invites community to come and learn about their religion and practices—took daughter and boyfriend who had served in Afghanistan—He had almost a panic attack being around folks in traditional dress. Attended the service and may have come to some healing. In Morocco—heard call to prayer and was struck by the spiritual value of that practice

Group #3

Facilitators—Monica Cross and Sue Tarleton

Recorder—Denise Turner

--a Muslim man married to congregant

--no personal experience

--lots of experiences, learned politenesses, no cross-gender hugging of friends.

--just know of a mosque in town

--pharmacist at work, appreciative of welcome

Muslims in family

Senior Muslims—living interfaith

--more academic than developing relationships

--stationed in Saudi Arabia—everyone stopped to pray at noon. Deeper understanding at the ?????

Group #4

Facilitator—Kim Young

Recorder—Pastor Eva, Fruitridge CC

--experiences revealed: enthusiasm=youth, open and friendly—women always want to feed you, LOL

--Terms, conditions—males: Christian woman ok to marry, however, children belong to the Muslims, and unless married, non-Muslim women not good enough to touch a male Muslim

Group #5

Facilitator—Leon Bacchus

Recorder—Marsha Staley

--a visiting cleric at a church

--co-workers

--friends who are westernized but still pray

--at Berkeley many Middle Eastern speakers about political events

--visiting a mosque after Ramadan—feeling a big jarred by how normal they are, not portrayed this way

--taught English at the library to a Muslim woman—couldn't have a more loving and special woman and family

--visited a mosque that used to to be his home church

--doing their hair, they are taken in a back room so no one can see their hair

--being confused for a Muslim in his African attire

Group #6

Facilitator—Larry Love

Recorder—Margie Brown

---none prior to 9-11,. After 9/10 (???) leader of mosque held intentionally many gatherings to church, civic, community

--pre 9-11, close to Muslim colleague and family. After, they were heavily discriminated against, now they are very cautious. No May 2 our church hosting a forum.

--taking grandchildren to school, have seen head-covering on girls. Curious about their courage to do that.

--I know a personable business owner who puts on community meals

---our church did a “what we have in common” series at church, synaguge, home of the Imam. Shared meal, faith, dietary, sharing of creation stories, good soft intro.

---At Asilomar, CWF mission study joined interfaith conference. Embarrassed by questions of Christians

--Don't understand people's negativity to Islam.

Group #7

Facilitator—Jeanel Adams

Recorder—Bob Stienstra

--clerk, uniforms—I don't know who they are

--interfaith chaplain—all positive

--?????only Christian minister at open dinner after Paris

Group #8

Facilitators—Beth Barston and Victor Smith

Recorder

Eula Pagdilao

--3-4 years ago, there was a religious panel at FCC Vallejo and not long ago there was in Imam who invited FCC Vallejo to join their festival

--studied in Middle East—Head of Islamic Society and Head of Jewish Society and I were invited to speak during a conference of Islamic Society—complication with the full headscarf

--My first encounter—undergrad—good friends. Wearing veil. Why wear the veil—they explained, optional—want to become more Muslim

--great admiration for middle-schooler Muslim who wears the veil

--have a brother who's a boxer who converted to Islam and changed his name to Islamic ones. Also a few of the siblings were converted into Islam. But the sect of Islam is different from Islam in Middle East.

--Learned Muslims are people, brother, sisters, entertainer...

--Two Muslim women in CPE group, other student has Muslim-phobia

--step up during all; interviewed women born in Christian (home?) who converted into Islam, women felt protected

Group #9

Facilitator—Carol Bono

Recorder—Nancy Brink

--traveling in Israel, meeting a Muslim—he wants PEACE

--Muslim at work, Christians against Islamaphobia

--Father from Persia—around Islam all the time—he was not practicing but grandma was—people ract the Persian last name

--Friendship with Essroa, Muslim woman—open, conversations

Group #10

Facilitator -Don Stump

Recorder—Sandy berry

—As undergraduate, met a Muslim/Queer woman, not a terrorist, normal human being, struggle like everyone else, regular people

--Nephew raised Mennonite, became agnostic, now Muslim, married to Muslim—experienced/noticed differences in wedding ritual—simpler—no music—reception same—lots of dancing—complicated family relationships, just like in any family

--adult education class at churc—4-6 week class—used materials with kDVD—introduction, educational

--response—attended a Christian church with Imam—invited to preach, share info

Group #11

Facilitator—Leanne Stump

Recorder—Rachel Thomson

--“Salaam a laikum” [As-salamu ‘alaykum]

--We’re all on a continuum

--Perfect your relationships

--We’re all people

Group #12

Facilitator—Katy Valentine

Recorder—Beth Kissinger

--In college, she went to all-night café with study group. During Ramadan, Muslim friend kept wanting to buy her food or drinks.

--- Paris bombing—invited Muslim to church to talk about something in Koran.

--State park ranger—various diverse population would come to park. Pulled over speeding car with Muslims. They were terrified, almost shaking with fear.

--In charge of adult ed. Hired a Muslim student to work for IT support. Nothing different than any other employee.

--Works for Boy Scouts of America. Worked with colleague opening up Boy Scout troop for Muslims. Very nice teenage boys. Great to meet a “youth” face of Muslims. Understand need for dialogue and inter-relationships between groups.

--Works at a college and manages IT. One employee is a Muslim. Co-worker went on paternity leave and the Muslim showed up with a meal for entire family even though he didn't know everyone—instance of generosity and kindness.

--Niece went to daycare with a Muslim lady. The little girl emulated prayer mat.

Group #13

Facilitator—Bob Adams

Recorder—Bonnie Hawley

--Fiji Muslims=not just Middle Eastern—changed perspective

--African American (Ethiopian) converted to Islam due to marriage. Right across the street from a Muslim university.

--Met Muslims right after 9/11 –neighbors are best friends and adopted their grandchildren—helped fill Christmas baskets

Lubbock, Texas—inclusiveness dialogue—appreciated message—helped her feel at ease—looked at each other and said, “Peace be with you”.

--Muslim wife accepted Christ—husband came with her to church—sister Muslim and nephew in prison

--In India in Peace Corps—Calcutta had huge upheaval—Hindu poor cooperated and shared water during drought

--Islam mosque invites guests to Ramadan gathering—Pakistan mosque in Woodland—Muslims are all over the world! Looks vary.

--has no personal experience

QUESTION 3—WHAT ARE YOUR FEARS/CONCERNS ABOUT ISLAM?

Group #1

- not about, more for—Muslims are our brothers and sisters because they branched off of Ishmael and Isaac—we are connected with same ancestors—sad to see Americans angry with Islam
- ditto
- different political views in family, but concerned about current system and statements
- worried that holocaust -type of occurrence could again happen
- large interfaith group, “Meet a Muslim”, was started—60-80 people attend! --Why don’t Muslims denounce what is happening?—but Christians could be asked the same.—We can’t paint the whole world with the same brush.
- when people are fearful it becomes a foundation for acting out of fear, not love.
- The people who follow fearful politicians are ?????????????? to fear/hate

Group #2

- Violence is associated and experienced with radical Islam.
- How do we strengthen ties with Islamics?
- Fear of terrorist groups—what motivates ISIS?
- People of Islam and others are being attacked out of fear.
- Concern with the extremists—suicide bombers, etc. How can we be peacemakers?
- Fear the media—not balanced air space, i.e., on the day of the Belgium terrorist attack an apology by a U.S. general for the US bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital. The first got lots of air time, the second just a few seconds.

Group #3

- There is a lot of fear out there, brought on by media
- minority represents majority. Fear for Islam itself, fear for friends.
- extreme elements hijacking the whole thing. Treatment of women is of concern.
- What’s going to happen? Media has big influence. How do you tell people that what they’re thinking is wrong? What do I say to them?
- They wouldn’t have the clout to influence the youth without the sensationalism.
- Younger folks in Islam are threatened by U.S.
- fear for lost youth and of growing extreme violence.
- fear of misunderstanding.

Group #4

- Prejudice developing due to all negative world events portrayed through the
- hard to be Christian and not develop negative thoughts when Muslims are killing their own people and themselves for the sake of Islam
- Muslim influencing without whole story—youth worldwide being influenced

Group #5

- just like any faith there are fanatics who create the problem
- concerned about how women are treated in the Islam culture
- extremists who are inducted
- what is the line that is crossed to cause such a peaceful religion to become----
- fear of the unknown
- have no problems with the peace-loving members
- fear of individuals who think they have the answers and they don't
- we should not blame the religion when something bad happens

Group #6

- The question assumes we have fears. Add or affirmations
- white minority, globalism, culture and power change. Islam is one of the largest logs on that fire of fear.
- stereotype one lump mold ,i.e., all Christians are homophobic).
- concern is for Islam and their vulnerability. We are fearful, don't know any better
- people exploit our fear for their own advantage, to get profits, votes, etc. Fear is easier than solutions. People on edge when no clear answers, fall into fear.
- Concern= large immigrant communities with no interest in joining the new culture and community.
- Christians pro-American means anti-Christian. Losing who we can be against so we know who we are (communism, gays, Islam...)

Group #7

- Fear of the different (them
- How can we escape it?
- Fear—not knowing
- ??

Group #8

- intimidated by person with burkha—fear more for Muslims in the neighborhood
- not fear Muslim as [much as] terrorists—whether or not Muslim treatment in some cultures is a violation of universal right?
- don't have fear of Muslims but understand there are fanatic groups
- not as afraid of radical Islam as radical Christians
- Learned from elders to avoid places with large Islam populations—even Muslim friends said the same.

Group #9

- Sometimes have fears—much from media—come back to they are just people—fear is what if I didn't stand up for Muslims?
- I shy ??? from strangers—keep to who I know—we can ??? the Muslim women but not guys
- the deeper I am Christian, causes me to question fear—media pushes fear
- Muslims struggle with the same things we do. Fundamentalists are a problem in all religions
- Fundamentalists are in all faiths—leads to extremist—Obama correct in not talking about Islamic terrorists.

Group #10

- As history buff—seeing 800 years ago—religious war—shiite/suni/internal conflict—just like other religious wars, e.g., reformation—Therefore.....
- As person of color—blacks, latinos, immigrant, Asian, Pacific, marginalized—what do we do for our own marginalized groups? --The ones who built this country
- profiling of Islms, e.g., I put my scarf over my head and people look at me differently
- Re:profiling—noticed similar responses during and after service in Vietnam
- Relative (in-law) repents negative reactions to ??? head covering

Group #11

- mosque—our neighborhood will be a target
- we continue to be polarized
- radicalized Christians will take control
- neighbors starting soething
- radical Islam is to Islam as KuKluxKlan is to Christianity
- under the burkha—how do these women feel?

Group #12

(no responses)

Group #13

- Fundamentalism
- safety of Muslims
- Hatred of Islam
- 9/11 phobia
- How can we learn from them?
- why houses don't have plants, pictures on wall, etc.
- Mohammad was only warrior of leaders
- read the Koran

QUESTION 3—WHY DO YOU THINK ISLAMOPHOBIA IS ON THE RISE?

Group #1

- happy, satisfied people don't cause revolutions
- people need to remember what happened in the past.

Group #2

- What might we do to reach out and be peacemakers?
- Media is part of the fuel for the rise of Islamophobia.
- We need to find ways to converse with each other.
- Knowing each other helps us to trust each other.
- On the upswing because of "instant" media. People are terrified. Media doesn't help. The terrorists want the media attention.
- Rising because of the media response to it—becomes a generalized thing—relationships and finding ways to get together will be a way to help.
- politics are part of the problem. Let's hope religion can be part of the solution.
- What should we pray for?
 - churches, ministers, kids—youth of today
 - keep the conversations going
 - A call
 - How can I be in relationship with those who are different from us
 - Terrorist groups like ISIS, that they realize God's love and want peace
 - For wisdom about how to resist evil
 - Wisdom and counsel of God

Group #3

- Fox news/propaganda/political candidates
- fear feeds extremism stranger danger
- it's "easier" in a way to have us vs. them
- lots of civil unrest in mid-east—feels a lot geographically closer
- because young men see not a good economic life, can fall into gangs.

Group #4

- fear drives all
- lack of knowledge for better understanding
- move toward (advocacy—ask a group or at least one, to visit and share the good that they do and not get hung up on or develop negative Islamophobia out of ignorance.

Group #5

- Donald Trump (easy answer—smile)
- jihadists, beheadings, what is going on in the world
- people are afraid of things they are not familiar with
- media coverage
- prejudice is all around
- U.S. has been involved in the region for decades. We helped toppled leaders because of the oil. We support the groups until they no longer do what we want. We should know the history before we judge the situation. A vicious circle. We need to recognize our role in it.
- media shoves it down our throats. You build up a phobia
- what might be on their news channels about us.
- fear of the unknow

If invited to join a discussion with a Muslim would you go?

- yes, to learn more
- Yes, yes, yes
- see other viewpoints
- there's always room for more

Group #6

- Our concern is for the safety of Muslims in US
- because of all bad stuff on the media
- I am afraid I will be too lazy or afraid to intercede on their behalf.

Group #7

???????????????

Group #8

- unprovoked war engage for decades—current events, all the made-up stuff
- media, advertising, it's ??? --portrayal of muslims—leaders should continue to educate people about the Muslims we know, not the Muslims the media is portraying
- certain group keeps us afraid—media/politics

Group #9

- Always there is a phobia—used to rally people to a joint hate—it works—we need to take down walls to be more safe
- tv--women afraid of Muslims—went to that community and was taken in—people like all of us—don't link terror and faith
- media chooses to show us images to heighten Islamophobia—we are too surface and so we don't go deep—come with curiosity
- counter to Islaophobia is on the rise
- what other response could we have made to 9/11?
- What we did was shameful
- refreshing to talk like this—we censor ourselves
- ISIS wants to create fear so we will increase micro-agressions against Muslims who, in response, will be more easy to radicalize

Group #10

- Question strikes close—during/after Japanese internment, when I was a kid, when students came back—realized this treatment was different from treatment of German POW because they looked like “us”. No difference between Islamophobia and other
- fear of losing “our” place
- images of violence—video clips—jihadists' violence—We don't see images oof family life, everyday life. We fear based on video/images we are fed on social media.—Middle East trouble—similar to other trouble of new immigrant communities
- Historically, similar to Catholic community immigrant to America
- We see/hear news—video social media. Fear based on overexposure to violent sectarian
- We didn't all just come here—some of us are indigenou to this land—e.g., Mexican American
- Blacks brought over in chains—you can pick us out easily—range of skin tones—visual identification by color profiling
- political rhetoric—outrageous othering

Editorial Remark about process by Leader
We could have a vote—take sides
Instead we have had a rhetoric
Theology of fear? Or theology of abundance

Group #11

- Not on the rise—the cities
- children need to travel
- Donald Trump

Group #12

- One basic reason—evil men lust for power. Evil men perverting Islam and evil men in Western world exploiting fear
- Church contacted HSU group to ask them to share their faith—hopes to gain insight. Needs to know more about all our family cultures.
- Lack of education about Islam
- Mass perception of wrong doing
- understanding is lacking from white Christians
- people (politicians) who stir up unrest and racial unease
- build dialogue
- Learn about other traditions
- lack of education, lack of knowledge—media is telling us what to believe—government??????? Are telling us. Feeling of struggle—“us” and “them. Have to work to be one family.
- We don't know how to deal with fear

Group #13

- St. Francis of Assisi was into Islam after the Crusades
- Attempt to ?????means
- No critical thinking in schools and close-minding of faith
- kids don't care—uneducated
- we want their oil
- politicians
- they are different
- beheadings (fear)
- use Muslims as scapegoat

