

SEPTEMBER 11 ANNIVERSARY STUDIES

Resources for Interfaith Dialogue

by Jordan Blevins

As part of our 2011 Annual Conference Statement on the War in Afghanistan, there was a call for “districts, congregations, and individuals to engage openly in interfaith and intercultural dialogue to create a culture of conversation and respect.” The 10th anniversary of September 11 provides us with a unique opportunity to engage in this kind of dialogue – but it is vital that we do it from a place of openness, respect, and intentionality.

What follows are suggested resources for engaging in interfaith dialogue:

- United States Institute for Peace, “Building Interreligious Trust in a Climate of Fear: An Abrahamic Trialogue”: <http://www.usip.org/publications/building-interreligious-trust-climate-fear-abrahamic-trialogue>
- Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions: www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=4&sn=7
- Interfaith Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, “Getting to Know Neighbors of Other Faiths”: www.ncccusa.org/interfaith/ifrhome.html
- Auburn Theological Seminary, resources on interfaith and multifaith dialogue and education: <http://www.auburnseminary.org/multifaith>
- Interfaith Youth Core, activities and resources for engaging youth in interfaith dialogue: <http://www.ifyc.org/>
- Religions for Peace, toolkit for developing an interfaith Women of Faith network: <http://religionsforpeace.org/resources/toolkits/guide-wofn.html>

This is, of course, only a sampling of the resources available. They all come from partners of the Church of the Brethren in the movement to create a more peaceful world. In our 1981 Annual Conference Statement World Mission Philosophy and Program, we said,

We recognize the resurgence of other religious faiths. We recall Amos' insistence that God had called not only Israel from Egypt, but also the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (Amos 9:7). God has surely been at work through other faiths, most fruitfully in monotheistic faiths. We recognize the biblical heritage we share with Judaism and Islam. God moves in mysterious ways. It is evident that God is at work in every area long before Christian witnesses arrive. We do wish to affirm our belief that the revelation in Jesus Christ is ultimate. For us, Jesus is Lord. He saves, he makes whole. Nevertheless, we believe that God has used those outside the Hebrew-Christian heritage to achieve worthy ends. Therefore, we ought to hear what those of other religions have to say, enter into dialogue with them, and seek closer relations with

them. We have much to learn from them about devotion, commitment, simplicity, peace, relating faith to life, and the unity of all things. We have the good news to share with them—Jesus, the Christ.

As we walk with each other and with the world in seeking to build more just and harmonious societies, living out the spirit of that statement through interfaith dialogue must happen. May you, and your community, use the 10th anniversary of September 11 not only to remember what has happened, but as an opportunity for transformation, growth, and new life.