

Senior Washington DC Faith Leaders Gather to Address Global Poverty:

Voice Shared Religious Commitment to Address Situation in Haiti

January 13, 2010

Washington, D.C. – On Wednesday, January 13th, **over forty senior faith leaders** from communities and organizations throughout metropolitan Washington, D.C. gathered at Washington National Cathedral to explore avenues of collaboration between faiths around the issues of global poverty.

The meeting, convened by the Faiths Act Fellowship, Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty, ONE Campaign, and Institute for Faith and Service, provided a forum for leaders from congregations and ministries throughout Washington to come together around issues of mutual concern.

The meeting had been scheduled for weeks, but happened to come less than 24 hours after a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit southern Haiti. For a gathering of faith leaders committed to action on global poverty, the quickly unfolding tragedy in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere was too much to ignore.

The faith leaders expressed that despite their diverse faith communities, they stand in solidarity with one another and with those in Haiti. Several stayed after the meeting to discuss further action to support Haiti's population. They also encouraged all people from Washington DC to hold all those affected by the earthquake in their thoughts and prayers.

The gathering was remarkable, both for the expression of interfaith solidarity that was present and for the stated commitment to working together in the future, across faith lines, in metropolitan Washington.

Benjamin Bechtolsheim, a Faiths Act Fellow hosted by the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty, and an organizer of the event, said, "It was amazing to see people of faith coming together around an issue of common concern. The network that we have started to build will only continue to grow and strengthen as we engage further. We will build on the commitment to common action that was expressed today."

Imam Johari Abdul-Malik of the Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center, said, "DC Interfaith Response has the capacity to fill the gap that is not addressed in any of the individual faith-based work or in our current interfaith networks. So, we are seizing upon the crisis in Haiti to test the capacity of this new but timely effort."

A list of attendees at the meeting is appended.

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DC Interfaith Response Participants

Organizing Committee

Sarah Baker, Faiths Act Fellowship, Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty
Benjamin Bechtolsheim, Faiths Act Fellowship, Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty
Heidi Christensen, Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty
Jean Duff, Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty
Mark Farr, Points of Light Institute, Institute for Faith and Service
Adam Phillips, ONE Campaign
Erik Schwarz, Interfaith Works, Institute for Faith and Service

List of Participants in DC Interfaith Response

Imam Johari Abdul-Malik, Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center
Rizwaan Akhtar, Buxton Initiative
Tom Andrews, Episcopal Diocese of Washington
Terry Angelotti, Catholic Diocese of Arlington
Anthony Bosnick, Archdiocese of Washington
Ronald Braxton, Metropolitan AME Church
David Caprara, Global Peace Service Alliance
Lauren Conn, ONE Campaign
Anuttama Dasa, ISKCON Governing Commission
Reverend Dennis Edwards, Peace Fellowship Church
Robert Egger, DC Central Kitchen
Jacob Feinspan, Jews United for Justice
Reverend Carol Flett, Washington National Cathedral College
Melissa Gang, Habitat for Humanity
Reverend David Grey, Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church
Mr. Marco Grimaldo, Bread for the World
Reverend Robin Gulick, Virginia Theological Seminary
Cemal Gumus, Muslim Association of Virginia
Taalibah Hassan, Muslim Association of Virginia
Khizer Husain, American Muslim Health Professionals
Sarah Jacobson, Buxton Initiative
Patty Johnson, Washington National Cathedral
Thomas Jones, Habitat for Humanity International
Reverend Patrick Kennedy, The Christian Community
Randa Kuziez, Faiths Act Fellowship, The Malaria Policy Center
Dr. Douglas Learned, The National Presbyterian Church
Reverend Clark Lobenstine, InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington
Jena Luedtke, Rumi Forum
Samuel Mall, Reach Out International
Reverend Nora Minassian, The Christian Community
Teryn Oglesby, Buxton Initiative
Meg Poole, 9/11 Unity Walk, Meridian International Center
Rabbi Sid Schwarz, Panim
Dr. Omar Shahin, Islamic Relief USA
Jack Sibley, Global Peace Service Alliance
Mac Skelton, Buxton Initiative
Avi Smolen, Faiths Act Fellowship, The Malaria Policy Center
Dr. Sayyid Syeed, Islamic Society of North America