



Minutes – Meeting of 6/24/2010

Attendance: Habeeb Ahmed, Seemi Ahmed, Hank Arond, Ronnie Arond, Paul Auerbach, Safdar Chadda, Isma Chaudhry, Ann Christensen, Jean Judd, Helen Kearney, Jacqueline Lateef, Khalid Lateef, Mark Lukens, Brenda Martin, Tahir Mian, Robert Nuxoll, Elaine Peters, Shirley Romaine, Richard Tibbets, John Tilton, Kausar Zaman, Barbara Zeller, Melvin Zeller.

Minutes and Treasurer's Report: As today's meeting featured the viewing of the documentary *Abraham's Children*, we waived the review of the Minutes and the Treasurer's Report.

Abraham's Children: Paul Auerbach thanked everyone for attending today's meeting to view the documentary *Abraham's Children*. He then introduced Rich Tibbets, who gave a brief introduction and overview of the film.

The documentary *Abraham's Children* tells the stories of Muslim youth, mostly children of foreign-born parents, growing up in American society. Following the documentary, ICLI member Isma Chaudhry led a discussion about the film.

Isma noted that she was skeptical when filming began. For instance, there was no script for the film. The producers simply followed the children and their families and recorded their conversations. Isma noted that youth speak openly, not always "politically correct." In addition, she didn't know some of the other families being filmed. However, she observed that regardless of whether the families were conservative or liberal Muslims, they all shared the same concerns for the welfare of their children. These included concern about peer pressure, illegal drugs, and boy-girl relationships, among other things. Mark Lukens later noted that, like Muslims, Christian parents have the same concerns for their children.

Isma invited her son Ahmad, one of the children featured in the documentary, to respond to some questions about Muslim youth. When asked whether there was much interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim youth, Ahmad noted that his best friend, Jack, is Jewish. Jack was present at the viewing of this documentary, as he and Ahmad had places to go after the viewing was over. In a reference to the 9/11 attacks, Ahmad asserted that members of one ethnic group should not be blamed as a group for the atrocious behavior of extremists.

When members stated that Muslim boys have more freedom than girls, Isma noted that we sometimes stereotype and observe what we expect to see. For instance, there was much concern expressed about wearing of the hijab, despite the fact that most girls and women in the film did not wear one. When some spoke about girls attending single-gender religious schools, Isma noted that some Catholics also send their daughters to single-gender religious schools. Mark Lukens observed that the film showed a diversity of Muslim youth from both conservative and liberal religious families. These youth were being educated in public schools, private schools, religious schools, and home-school settings, mirroring the variety found in non-Muslim society.

And Isma noted that, given the cultural diversity of the population in the NYC area, even those educated in single-gender religious schools have a great deal of exposure to all ethnic groups.

Bob Nuxoll, who taught in NYC public schools for many years, noted that practicing Muslim youth seemed to befriend other religious youth, regardless of whether the religion is Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. Isma agreed, noting that kids feel comfortable with other kids based on similar values and upbringing.

Following discussion of the film, we next discussed bringing *Abraham's Children* to a wider audience.

- Bobbie Zeller said that she came due to her concern about the negative attitude towards Muslims in American society. She said that this film would be attractive to young folks and help them to see Muslim as fellow human beings. She said we need to discuss religious issues with adults as well.
- Mark Lukens noted that it's easy to demonize those you don't know, but this DVD humanizes Muslims by showing them as people with values. He noted that each town on Long Island has an interfaith clergy committee, which we can contact to arrange viewings of *Abraham's Children*.
- Ronnie Arond suggested showing the DVD at local YMCAs and Boy/Girl Scout groups.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Tibbets

NEXT INTERFAITH ALLIANCE MEETING:

Thursday, July 29th, 7:30pm
at the Islamic Center of Long Island (ICLI)
835 Brush Hollow Road, Westbury, NY 11590

DIRECTIONS to ICLI:

Website: www.icliny.org

Email: 1icli@optonline.net

Telephone: (516) 333-3495

(Contact the Islamic Center via computer or telephone if you need directions)

At our July 29th meeting, we will discuss plans to show the documentary *Abraham's Children*, which we viewed at our June 24th meeting, to local houses of worship and other venues. And, as always, we will discuss significant church / state issues on the national and local levels.

Hiroshima Commemoration

*On this 65th Commemoration of Hiroshima,
Great Neck SANE/Peace Action and the L.I. Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives
invite you to join us in saying:*

**NO NUKES
NO WARS
SAVE THE PLANET**

Thursday, August 5, 7:30 pm

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock
48 Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset

*"We know that nuclear disarmament is not a distant unattainable dream.
It is an urgent necessity, here and now. We are determined to achieve it."*

- Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations

Hear: David Wildman

Executive Director, *Human Rights & Racial Justice for Global Ministries Methodist Church*;
Co-author, *Ending the U.S. War in Afghanistan*. Recently returned from Afghanistan.

ALSO

Hon. Michelle Schimel

NY State Assemblywoman

Rev. Mark Lukens

Bethany Congregational Church;

President, *Interfaith Alliance of L.I.*

Habeeb Ahmed

President, *Islamic Center of L.I. at Westbury*

Fred Brewington

Civil Rights Attorney, Community Activist

Rabbi Irwin Huberman

Congregation Tiferet Israel of Glen Cove

Margaret Melkonian

Executive Director,

Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives

Music by jazz pianist Bill Heller

Co-Chairs

Hon. Jon Kaiman, Supervisor, *Town of North Hempstead*

Stan Romaine, Chair, *Great Neck SANE/Peace Action*

Closing Peace Pole Ceremony by Neighborhood Children

Endorsers: UUCSR Social Justice Committee • Interfaith Alliance • Pax Christi L.I. Code Pink L.I. • North Country Peace Group • Suffolk Peace Network • Womanspace in Great Neck • Peace Action New York State (list in formation)

For more information and directions

516-487-3786 or 516-741-4360

www.longislandpeace.org