

TALKING POINTS

TOPICS IN CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

USER'S GUIDE

“Talking Points” is a set of leaflets issued by the staff of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to set forth opportunities for discussion and engagement around issues in Christian-Muslim Relations. These Talking Points are intended to stimulate reflection, response and activity on key issues as part of ongoing inter-religious engagement today.

Each leaflet addresses a particular topic and concludes with several questions for further discussion. These Talking Points have been formulated in such a way as to draw out inquiries and reflections that might otherwise go unattended in our relations with Christians and Muslims. They address real questions raised by Christians in varying communities.

For the most part, the Talking Points are intended for discussion among all Christians, as part of our ongoing inquiry and attention to interfaith activity and encounter. And yet, inviting Muslim guests and contributors for discussion on these topics will add depth, interest and insight.

These Talking Points have a historical background, both in Christian-Muslim relations generally and more specifically in the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America today. The past twenty years have seen a transformation in the stance of many Christians and many ecclesial organizations toward Muslims and Islam. Various factors have influenced this development. These include:

- the witness of ELCA missionaries who have served in Islamic contexts around the world;
- the history of immigration of Muslims to the United States;

- the consequences to Muslim-Christian relations after September 11, 2001;
- the continued experience of living together peacefully and productively in a pluralistic American society;
- the rise of Muslim organizations and a public Muslim voice in collaboration with Christian voices in this country; and
- the increased engagement between Muslims and Christians worldwide.

In recent years, Christians are experiencing a substantial re-evaluation of their attitudes, assumptions and perspectives toward Muslims and Islam. Within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, from the international to national and local contexts, we are experiencing a new era of self-understanding as it relates to mission, mutual awareness-building and international advocacy efforts that have the potential for making significant contributions to Christians and Muslims alike in the years to come.

These Talking Points do not constitute an official Christian or ELCA statement about Islam or Christian-Muslim relations. Instead, the Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Muslim Relations and staff of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations commend these Talking Points to all people of good will for the advancement of Christian-Muslim relations specifically, and the improvement of inter-religious relations generally.

We greatly appreciate your feedback from your use of these Talking Points, which will assist in constructing more refined Talking Points in the future. The last leaflet in this folder includes an evaluation; please fill this out and send it to us at your earliest convenience.

Further information on Muslim-Lutheran relationships, including a downloadable form of these Talking Points, may be found on the website: www.elca.org/ecumenical.

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