

## 5. Making Connections 2

# The Jesus Fatwah

### “A Common Word Between Us and You”

Following is an excerpt from “A Common Word” ([www.acommonword.com](http://www.acommonword.com)), a 2007 initiative from Muslim leaders encouraging dialogue and understanding between Muslims and Christians:

Finding common ground between Muslims and Christians is not simply a matter for polite ecumenical dialogue between selected religious leaders. Christianity and Islam are the largest and second largest religions in the world and in history. Christians and Muslims reportedly make up over a third and over a fifth of humanity respectively. Together they make up more than 55% of the world’s population, making the relationship between these two religious communities the most important factor in contributing to meaningful peace around the world. If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. With the terrible weaponry of the modern world; with Muslims and Christians intertwined everywhere as never before, no side can unilaterally win a conflict between more than half of the world’s inhabitants. Thus our common future is at stake. The very survival of the world itself is perhaps at stake.

And to those who nevertheless relish conflict and destruction for their own sake or reckon that ultimately they stand to gain through them, we say that our very eternal souls are all also at stake if we fail to sincerely make every effort to make peace and come together in harmony. God says in the Holy Qur’an: Lo! God enjoineth justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbiddeth lewdness and abomination and wickedness. He exhorteth you in order that ye may take heed (Al Nahl, 16:90). Jesus Christ ( عليه السلام ) said: Blessed are the peacemakers ....(Matthew 5:9), and also: For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? (Matthew 16:26).

So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.

## **Discussion Questions** (pause DVD after each video segment)

### **Diversity is Holy**

1. How have popular stereotypes around Islamic intolerance affected your perceptions of Islam?
2. To what extent is diversity valued in your faith tradition?
3. Historically, how has your faith tradition contributed to interfaith understanding and cooperation?

### **Overcoming “Otherness”**

1. How have you been able to (or how might you) overcome the feeling that Muslims are “other”?
2. What topic or question feels uncomfortable when asking a Muslim about his or her faith?
3. What topic or question about your faith would you not want to discuss with a Muslim?

### **Leaving the World a Better Place**

1. How does your faith tradition instruct you to leave the world a better place?

2. How does Feisal Abdul Rauf's description of the Cordoba Initiative compare to media accounts of the project, which call it the "Ground Zero Mosque"? Whose telling of the story seems more probable?

3. Eboo Patel's group of high school friends serves as his metaphor for what the world needs to aspire to. Do you agree? Disagree? (or are you just jealous that you weren't a part of his lunch group?)

### **Mercy and Love**

1. Have you ever had a chance to get to know someone from another faith tradition? If so, how has it helped to change your mind about that person (and their faith tradition)?

2. What is the role of mercy and of love in your faith tradition?

3. What does your faith tradition teach you about loving God and neighbor?

### ***The Jesus Fatwah* Theme Question:**

What element or learning from this session do you think will be most significant in your everyday interactions with others?

