

December 22, 2006

Dr. Yousef Abou Allaban
Islamic Society of Boston
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Cambridge MA 02139

Dr. Charles Jacobs
The David Project
25 Dorchester Ave
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Gentlemen:

We are writing to you with concern, but also with hope. We are concerned because we know you are engaged in a seemingly intractable dispute and that this painful reality weighs heavily upon everyone involved. Then too, we are anxiously aware of the burden these festering circumstances may place upon the future of interreligious relationships in greater Boston. Yet, in the midst of all this we still find reason for hope. Separately, you have indicated a genuine openness to finding resolution, entertained several creative suggestions, and, being persons of good will, you have expressed a deep desire to offer leadership in difficult times.

We are grateful that both of your organizations have been willing to thoughtfully air your concerns before the board of the Interreligious Center for Public Life (ICPL), which our schools jointly sponsor. What is more, a distinguished subcommittee of the ICPL has been attempting to work with your representatives to explore the potential for an amicable solution. They have recently briefed us on their work and conveyed their respect for your earnest commitment to exhaust alternatives for resolution.

Sobered by the hard realities of the situation and yet buoyed by your genuine interest in finding resolution, we have decided to take the bold step of proposing a new course of action for you to consider. Based on what you have shared, we believe this proposal holds within it the necessary building blocks to bridge the gap that divides you while still respecting the positions you hold most dear.

We propose that:

- Both The Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) and The David Project (TDP) agree to terminate all law suits that are currently pending in the courts;
- The ISB and TDP issue a joint statement condemning and disavowing, without exception, all forms of terrorism;
- Both parties join in affirming the right and the benefit for all communities of faith, be they Muslim, Jewish, Christian or any other, to build and maintain houses of worship;
- Both parties welcome and support the creation of a Center for Interfaith Understanding, a project which the ICPL commits to assist you in developing;
- And, that upon the accomplishment of these things, a celebratory event be held involving the Islamic Society of Boston and The David Project and the hand of friendship extended. .

As presidents of historic institutions of different faiths, we must recognize that there are some important things about which our traditions disagree. Yet we also recognize that we risk betraying the most deeply held tenets of our faith if our disagreements and competing claims to the truth reduce us to denying one another's humanity or committing any form of violence against one another. Given the sad history of religious difference and the heart-wrenching divisions that continue to haunt the world we feel called to a special responsibility; that of finding within our traditions the resources to overcome these differences. To be sure, we seek not to erase differences, but rather to bridge them. We would be about the business of reconciliation, not resignation nor naïve circumvention. We seek to join hands to use that with which we each have been blessed to do great things together. There is too much need and too much pain in the world for us to do otherwise.

So it is that we stand ready to work with you in any capacity you believe will help overcome your differences. We hope our proposal is a step in that direction. If you feel we have made progress, please share your thoughts with us so we might continue to build on this foundation.

May this be a season of hope for us all!

Sincerely,



David Gordis
President
Hebrew College



Nick Carter
President
Andover Newton Theological School

CC Howard Cooper, Jeffrey Robbins