

AMERICA INDIVISIBLE

An American's Digital Guide To
**EVANGELICAL
BRIDGE BUILDERS**



UPDATED: JANUARY 2019



WHO ARE EVANGELICAL BRIDGE BUILDERS?

"Nearly half of Evangelicals believe that Muslims are a physical threat. In contrast, three in ten of Americans with no religion think that conservative Christians want to do them harm. For Black Protestant respondents, atheists pose the most danger. American Jews feel most physically threatened not by Muslims but by Conservative Christians."

[Baylor University Religion Survey, 2017]

America has become an increasingly polarized country, and Evangelicals feature prominently in this national rhetoric. A Baylor University study found that the most feared religious groups in the United States are Muslims, atheists, and conservative Christians.

Despite these negative attitudes toward, conservative Christians, Evangelicals hold considerable political influence. They make up a significant voting bloc in the United States and play a role in presidential politics and U.S. international affairs.

In short, American Evangelicals matter. This is especially true in the fight against hate and bigotry.

At a time when Americans of Muslim faith, and those perceived to be Muslim (from Sikh, Arab, South Asian, and Black American communities) are facing heightened discrimination, a diverse network of Evangelicals is growing a movement of bridge building with vulnerable communities—and with Muslims in particular. These Evangelical leaders seek to build greater understanding of Muslims within Christian communities while advocating for the rights of Muslims and other minorities with outside coalitions and partners.

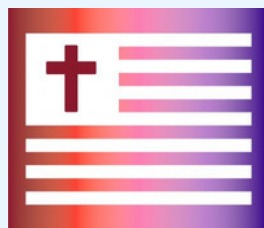
This [digital, clickable](#) guide to Evangelical Bridge Builders highlights the work of these trailblazers. Although these examples focus primarily on initiatives that build relationships between Evangelicals and Americans of Muslim faith, given the recent rise in hate crimes targeting these communities, there are many inspiring examples of Evangelical bridge building with a range of other vulnerable communities. Let us know how we can improve this guide. Use it, share it, and tell us about how you live out these ideals. America Indivisible is a coalition effort, and we are together in this cause.

Among African Americans, 75 percent are Christians, 67 percent are Protestants, and 42 percent are evangelicals.

Among white Americans, 68 percent are Christians, 47 percent are Protestants, and 27 percent are evangelicals.

Half of evangelicals under 30 years old are now nonwhite (50%), a far higher share than among evangelicals older than 65 (23%).

WHO ARE AMERICAN EVANGELICALS?



[USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture, 2018]

Among Hispanic Americans, 73 percent are Christians, but only 25 percent are Protestants. About half of those Protestants are evangelicals.

Among Asian Americans, 30 percent are Christians and 16 percent are Protestants.

About a quarter of Americans (26%) are self-identified evangelicals. About two-thirds of those evangelicals are white (64%), while 19 percent are black, 10 percent are Hispanic, and the remaining 6 percent are Asian, mixed race, or other ethnicities.

Data source: Christianity Today, 2017



PROFILES OF BRIDGE BUILDERS

PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

Peace Catalyst International is one of the leading Evangelical organizations waging peace between Evangelicals and their Muslim neighbors across the country and around the world.



How to do Jesus-Centered Peace Building



How to Visit Your Local Mosque



Tips for Starting Local Peacebuilding Relationships

One Peace Catalyst affiliated church, the **Valley Vineyard Christian Fellowship** in Reseda, CA engages in shared meals, dialogue and relationship building with their local Islamic center.

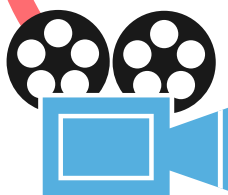


Kingdom Mission Society seeks to help Evangelicals and their neighbors enter into spaces of tension in a caring way. Executive Director Alexei Laushkin is an advocate for Muslim-Christian peacebuilding.



One of the great joys of the past few years has been our work around peacemaking. Engaging with American Muslim leaders and getting to better understand the complexity of the Muslim world has been a real delight. I love discovering people with a commitment to bridge differences.

-Alexei Laushkin



Check out this Muslim-Christian **dialogue toolkit** on the film *The Sultan and the Saint*.



PROFILES OF BRIDGE BUILDERS

LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

Neighborly Faith equips Christians to overcome fear, speak truth and build relationships with their Muslim neighbors. They launched a new Fellowship program to build Muslim-Evangelical relationships on college campuses. And they feature inspiring stories on their podcast.



Bob Roberts Jr., Pastor of Northwood Church in Keller, TX partnered with an American imam to launch a Muslim-Christian peacebuilding effort to address the fear and suspicion between pastors and imams around the world. They bring together Muslim and Christian leaders through facilitated dialogues and peacebuilding retreats.



Listen: "I Had to Take My Shoes Off" Evangelical Pastors' First Time at a Mosque

Listen: An Evangelical and a Muslim Take On Liberalism... Together

Check out the **full list** of episodes [here](#)



Article: How the National Prayer Breakfast sparked an unusual meeting between Muslims and evangelicals



Article: Three Evangelicals Walk into a Muslim Convention



Listen to this Neighborly Faith podcast interview with Pastor Bob





PROFILES OF BRIDGE BUILDERS

STORYTELLING AND EDUCATION

Two Faiths One Friendship is a blog site that highlights significant milestones in Muslim-Christian peacemaking. They're also releasing a documentary series to show how churches around the country are playing their part.

Two Faiths One Friendship



Multifaith Matters helps churches and Christians better engage a more multifaith world. Read about these inspiring churches from across the country engaging their neighbors of Muslim and other faiths.



RADICAL HOSPITALITY

After a tragic attack on a local mall, these St. Cloud, MN Evangelical leaders began forming a network of churches to foster understanding with their Muslim and Somali neighbors. They even hosted an event about "**Loving our Somali Neighbors**" to learn more about this community and involve others in the conversation.



Watch how the **River City Christian Church** in Sacramento reaches out to its Muslim neighbors as part of refugee resettlement efforts.





DISCUSS: EVANGELICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD MUSLIMS

Q1: How do these statistics make you feel? How might you use them to inspire positive action?

Q3: How does targeting communities because of their religious beliefs and traditions line up with American values? How does it line up with your personal values?

Q2: Take a second to think about your spiritual, religious, or moral identity. How would you react if you were targeted or your community surveilled?

Q4: What responsibility, if any, do we have to address the issues highlighted in these statistics?

78% of white Evangelicals say that they “want to live in a country where no one is targeted for their religious identity” and 67% oppose banning the building of mosques.

But...

Only 45% of white Evangelicals oppose the surveillance of US mosques.

Only 45% agree that “the negative things politicians say regarding Muslims is harmful to our country.”

Only 36% of white Evangelicals say that most Muslims living in the United States are committed to the well-being of America.

[SPU, 2018]

More than six in ten (61%) white Evangelical Protestants favor a policy that would prevent people from some majority Muslim countries from entering the country.

[PRRI, 2017]

72% of white Evangelicals say there is a natural conflict between Islam and democracy.

[Pew, 2017]

54% of younger white evangelicals (age 18-39) say that American Muslims are an important part of the religious community in the U.S., compared to 37% of older white evangelicals (age 40 and up).

[PRRI, 2011]



FURTHER READING



Want to Stop Islamophobia? Talk To Your Fellow Christians

"My children's lives depend on what you teach your children about my community and our beliefs."
Najeeba Syeed, Associate Professor Interreligious Education at Claremont School of Theology



Human Trustees Blog

Human Trustees aims to foster understanding and cooperation between Muslims and Christians so as to empower them to live up to their god-given calling as "trustees of the earth."



The **Evangelical Chapter of the Foundation for Religious Diplomacy** seeks to provide research and curricula to help build Multi-faith networks between Christians and their Muslim neighbors.



Survey of Religious and Community Attitudes Toward Muslims

In order to document evolving views from pastors on the perception of Muslims in their local communities, the New Evangelical Partnership convened several focus groups in Tennessee and North Carolina in 2014-2016.



Evangelical Christian Views and Attitudes Towards Christian- Muslim Dialogue

John Azumah is Professor of World Christianity and Islam at Columbia Theological Seminary



Muslim-Christian Relations: Historical and Contemporary Realities

Jane Idleman Smith is Professor of Islamic Studies and Co-Director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford Seminary, Hartford CT.



Toolkit for Mobilizing to Protect and Support American Muslims

This toolkit from the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign seeks to help equip faith leaders work against anti-Muslim discrimination and bigotry.



"The Sultan and the Saint" Peace Requires Encounter

Peace Requires Encounter calls on Muslims and Christians across America to start encounter dialogues around The Sultan and The Saint film.



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KNOW OTHER EVANGELICAL BRIDGE BUILDERS?

SEND YOUR ADDITIONS TO
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