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**Profiles of 6 members of the Evangelical Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group**

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Undated document

Dr. Mahmoud M. Ayoub  
Reverend Dr. Donald E. Wagner  
Dr. Gary M. Burge  
Dr. Ghada Hashem Talhami  
Dr. Martin N. Accad  
Dr. Munir El-Kassem

# BRIDGES OF FAITH

The Evangelical Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group

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## Members



**Dr. Mahmoud M. Ayoub** was born in South Lebanon. He received his education at the American University of Beirut (BA, Philosophy, 1964), the University of Pennsylvania (M.A., Religious Thought, 1966), and Harvard University (Ph.D., History of Religion, 1975).

From 1988 to 2008, he was a Professor and director of Islamic Studies in the Department of Religion, Temple University, Philadelphia, an Adjunct Professor at the Duncan Black Macdonald Center, Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, a Research Fellow at the Middle East Center, University of Pennsylvania and the Tolson visiting professor at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley California. In 1998, Dr. Ayoub helped devise and launch a graduate M.A. level program in Muslim-Christian relations and comparative religion for the Centre for Christian-Muslim Studies, University of Balamand, Lebanon, and since the Spring of 1999, has been its visiting professor. Mahmoud Ayoub has also previously taught at San Diego State University, the University of Toronto, and McGill University.

Throughout his academic career, Mahmoud Ayoub has received distinguished awards and scholarships, both for his achievements and researches. Among others, he was a recipient of the Kent Doctoral Fellowship and the Canada Council Fellowship. In 1994-5, he participated in the Fulbright Exchange of Scholars program for Malaysia. In the Spring-Summer of 2000, he undertook a research project on Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt and Lebanon, also on a Fulbright scholarship.

Mahmoud Ayoub is the author of a number of books including, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam and The Qur'an and Its Interpreters* (vol. 1 & 2). The summer of 2000 saw the release of his two-volume publication, *Dirasat fi al-'Alaqat al-Masihiyah al-Islamiyyah in Arabic* (Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations). *Islam: Faith and History* appeared in 2004. In addition, his articles have appeared in books and journals, like, *The Muslim World, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Bulletin of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies* (Tokyo, Japan) and *Islamochristiana* (Rome, Italy), among many others. Prof. Ayoub has also served and is still serving on a number of Advisory and Editorial Boards.

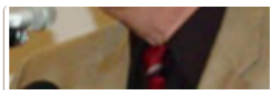
Mahmoud Ayoub's authority in both the scholarship and comparative study of Islam and Muslim-Christian relations, as well as inter-religious dialogue, is demonstrated by the national and international recognition he has received. This is reflected by his numerous local and overseas scholarly engagements. Since 1999, Dr. Ayoub has participated in the United States' Department of State's program, serving as one of its ambassadors to various parts of the Middle East and S.E. Asia, commenting on American society and institutions, inter-religious dialogue and Islam in America.

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**Reverend Dr. Donald E. Wagner** is an ordained Presbyterian clergyman who presently serves as Associate Professor of Religion at North Park University in Chicago, where he is also the Executive Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Don Wagner is the co-founder and director of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding and previously served Presbyterian churches in New Jersey and Evanston, Illinois, where he resides.

In addition to serving on the board of Friends of Sabeel—North America, which he helped to found in the early 1990s, Don has provided leadership for groups such as the Holy Land Trust, Pilgrims of Ibillin, the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation, and Youth Advocates. He has led numerous study groups to the Middle



East and works internationally to educate Christians about the problems of Christian Zionism.

As a man of deep compassion, and of moral depth and equity toward all human beings, Reverend Wagner has publicly supporting equal rights for Palestinians alongside Israelis which has always been a risky venture in the United States, as an

American professor who heads the only Middle Eastern studies centre at an evangelical American university

Wagner believes he and his colleagues are "raising legitimate issues about Israel-Palestine, critiquing Christian Zionism and end time theology, and trying to reach out to evangelicals and progressive forces in the Christian community.

His books include: *All in the Name of the Bible* (editor, 1986), *Peace or Armageddon* (with Dan O'Neill, 1993), *Anxious for Armageddon* (1995), and *Dying in the Land of Promise* (2000)

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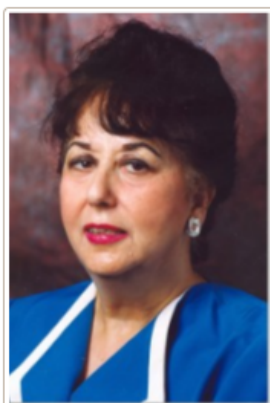
**Dr. Gary M. Burge** is a professor of New Testament in the Department of Biblical & Theological Studies at Wheaton College and Graduate School. He attended the University of California, Riverside; The American University of Beirut, Lebanon; Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California; and he received his Ph.D. from King's College, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland. He has been on the faculty of Wheaton College since 1992.

Two interests have influenced his academic work. He specializes in the gospels and the Life of Jesus. This has led to an academic specialty in the Fourth Gospel. Some of his writings include *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (1987), *Interpreting the Johannine Literature* (1992, 1998), the revision of the Gospel John in the *New Living Bible Translation*; *The NIV Application Commentary: John's Letters* (1996), and *The NIV Application Commentary: John's Gospel* (2000). He recently co-authored the textbook *The New Testament in Antiquity* (2009) for colleges and two books on explaining the cultural background of the Bible: *The Bible and the Land* and *Jesus the Middle Eastern Story Teller* (both released in 2009). His latest book, *Jesus and the Land*, is a theological study of the New Testament and the concept of "holy land." It will be released in January 2010 (U.S.: Baker Academic; U.K.: SPCK).

But in addition, he has taken up a strong interest in the Middle East since he was a student in Beirut in the mid-1970s. He has traveled frequently to Lebanon, Egypt, Cyprus, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Israel/Palestine. In 1993 he wrote *Who Are God's People in the Middle East? What Christians Are Not Being Told About Israel and the Palestinians* (1993). And more recently he published *Whose Land? Whose Promise?* (2003) which received a number of awards from national journals. He is often called upon to speak to the media on Christian Zionism and the church in the Middle East.

Gary is ordained in the Presbyterian Church, served in the United States Navy as a Presbyterian chaplain, and today has an active speaking and writing schedule for churches, conferences and retreats. His wife, Carol, is a clinical therapist in Wheaton and he has two daughters.

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**Dr. Ghada Hashem Talhami** was born in Amman, Jordan, to Palestinian parents and received her highschool education at Queen Zein School in Amman and Whyteleafe County Grammar School for Girls, Surrey, England. She received a B.A. in Liberal Arts (cum laude) and Departmental Honors from Western College for Women (of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio), and an M.A. in US Foreign Policy from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She holds a Ph. D. in African History from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

She was a visiting professor of African History at University of Illinois-Chicago, and for one year the Director of Arab Studies at the same school. She also served for one year as the Director of the Arab Information Center at Chicago, an office of the Arab League of States. She taught Middle East Politics, African Politics, Politics of the Third World, the Politics of Jerusalem, and Women of the Third World at Lake Forest College, where she holds the title of **D. K. Pearsons Professor of Politics, emerita**. She is also a Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago. Beginning in September, 2009, she will be the inaugural Susan Currier Visiting Professor of Gender and Global Studies at California Polytechnic University.

She is past president of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, past Editor of **Arab Studies Quarterly**, and past Chair of **Palestine Human Rights Campaign**. She is currently on the editorial board of Hartford Seminary's **Muslim**

**World**, and **Alternatives: The Turkish Journal of International Relations**. She is a member of the Managing Board of Editors of **Arab Studies Quarterly**. She is a member of the Board of North Park University's Center for Middle East

Studies. She continues to lecture at various academic institutions in the US and abroad and was a frequent speaker at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. She has also been a frequent guest on Public Television's program "Chicago Tonight", on CNN, and on ABC's radio and television program "Beyond the Beltway," NPR Chicago and Wisconsin, the Arabic Section of the Voice of America, the Milt Rosenberg talk show of WGN Chicago, Al-Jazeera's Arabic program, and television's the History Channel.

She is the author of six books: **Suakin and Massawa under Egyptian Rule** (University Press of America, 1979), **Palestine and the Egyptian National Identity** (PRAEGER, 1992), **The Islamic Mobilization of Women in Egypt** (University Press of Florida, 1996), **Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms** (University Press of Florida, 2001), and **Palestinian Refugees: Pawns to Political Actors** (Nova Science Publishers, 2003). Her latest book, **Palestine and the Egyptian Press: From al-Ahram to al-Ahali**, was released by Lexington Books in 2007. She is also the editor of an encyclopedia volume, **Children in the Middle East and North Africa**, published by Greenwood Press. She contributed an article "Peace Movements: Middle East and the Arab World," for **The Encyclopedia on Women**, published by Rutledge. She has edited four publications on women, one of which is **Women in the Islamic Maelstrom**, which appeared as a special issue of **Muslim World**. She co-edited a publication on the 1967 June War. She participated in a special conference on **Palestinian Women and Development**, which was convened in Vienna by the NGO Department of the Austrian Foreign Office in 2008. She also participated in **The Oxford Round Table**, 2003, with a presentation on the veiling controversy and European Muslim women. She has published more than fifty articles on the following topics: the Jerusalem issue, the Palestine question, development in the Arab World, the Jordan factor and the Palestine question, African-Arab relations, women in Islam, Palestinian women, women, education and development in the Persian Gulf countries, the Islamic philanthropy and women in Egypt, the Palestinian human rights issue, political Islam, and many others.

She has attended many international meetings and conferences in Jordan, Cyprus, Germany, Canada, Mexico, Britain, Egypt, Spain, Tunisia and Austria, where she presented papers on diverse subjects such as: women and development in the Middle East, the Palestinians in Iraq, the question of Jerusalem, Arab nationalism in the balance, Palestinian refugees and the Afro-American Islamic community in the US.

In recent years, she has participated in two colloquia by the World Council of Churches which were convened in Greece and Switzerland, both on the rights of different religious communities in Jerusalem. She also received a Senior Scholar Fulbright research and lecture grant for study in Syria in 1997.

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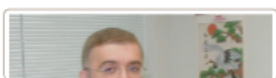
**Dr. Martin N. Accad** is the Director at the Institute of Middle East Studies of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (Lebanon). He is also Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California

He received a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) from the University of Oxford, UK. Also holding a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Eastern Christian Studies (Syriac Option) from the University of Oxford, Dr. Accad's life vision is to bring about positive transformation in thinking and practice between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and beyond. With various areas of interests and research including Christian-Muslim Relations and Dialogue, Islamic Studies, Contextualized Hermeneutics and Middle-Eastern Christianity (Greek, Syriac, Arabic).

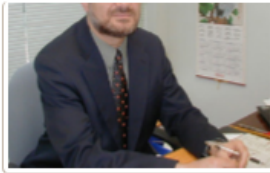
**Selected Publications:**

- 1) With John Corrie, "Trinity", in Corrie, John; J. Samuel Escobar & Wilbert R. Shenk, *IVP Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (IVP, 2007).
- 2) "Muhammad's Advent as the Final Criterion for the Authenticity of the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Hidāyat al-Hayāra fī Ajwibat al-Yahūd wa an-Nasāra*", in Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis & Pim Valkenberg (eds.), *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Dialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Peeters Publishers, Leuven: 2005).
- 3) "Rethinking Mission for the Middle East", in Peter F. Penner (ed.), *Christian Presence and Witness Among Muslims*, (Neufeld Verlag, Schwarzenfeld: 2005).
- 4) "The Interpretation of John 20.17 in Muslim-Christian Dialogue (8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> cent.): The Ultimate Proof-Text", in Thomas, David (ed) *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule* (Brill Academic Publishers: 2003).
- 5) "Corruption and/or Misinterpretation of the Bible: The Story of the Islamic Usage of *Tahriif*", in *The Near East School of Theology Theological Review*, XXIV/2, 2003, pp. 67-97.
- 6) "The Gospels in the Muslim Discourse of the Ninth to the Fourteenth Century: An Exegetical Inventorial Table (Parts I-IV)", in *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* Vol. 14, Nos. 1-4, Birmingham 2003.

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**Dr. Munir El-Kassem** was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1955. He was educated at Al-Maqasid Islamic Institute where the Foundation of his Islamic knowledge was established. He was the top student to be admitted in the Premedicine program at



the American University of Beirut. Following his migration to Canada, he continued his studies at the University of Western Ontario earning a Masters Degree in Medical Genetics thereafter joining the University of Toronto to graduate as a dental surgeon in 1986. After spending 15 years in general practice, he joined the University of Western Ontario as a professor at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.

Since his arrival in Canada in 1976, Dr. El-Kassem has been very actively involved in sharing his Islamic knowledge with Muslims as well as with people of other faiths. He has visited a large number of Muslim communities across Canada, the United States and the Caribbean. He has also participated in interfaith dialogue throughout the world and appeared on numerous radio and T.V. programs. His audio and videotapes on various Islamic issues have been widely distributed. He is the author of many Islamic books. At one point, he was a regular contributor to the London Free Press, writing on a variety of issues from an Islamic perspective. He also hosted a weekly radio show, Islamic Perspectives, on 1290 CJBK. Dr. El-Kassem is the recipient of the Golden Jubilee Award and the Outstanding Achievement Award for Volunteerism in Ontario.

Munir El-Kassem is currently the Muslim Chaplain at the University of Western Ontario and the president of the Islamic Institute for Interfaith Dialogue. He is married and blessed with five daughters and one son.

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