

A large, bright orange and yellow nuclear mushroom cloud rises from the ground against a dark, black sky. The cloud is the central visual element of the cover.

**Muslim-Christian Study Guides on the**  
**NUCLEAR WEAPONS**  
**DANGER**

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# Creation, Love, and Peace: People of Faith and the Nuclear Danger

*By Amanda Hendler-Voss*

## About This Resource

This resource, which includes study guides for three sessions, grows out of the work of the Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Weapons Danger (MCI). Developed by the Islamic Society of North America and the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy, the MCI seeks to enable Muslims and Christians in this nation to work to end the nuclear weapons danger. Learn more about the MCI at [www.mci-nwd.org](http://www.mci-nwd.org).

This is a supplemental resource to *The Muslim-Christian Study and Action Guide on the Nuclear Weapons Danger*, that provides introductory material, facts about the nuclear weapons danger, suggestions about what can be done about it, and Muslim, Catholic and Protestant perspectives on the nuclear weapons danger. *The Muslim-Christian Study and Action Guide on the Nuclear Weapons Danger* is available at [www.mci-nwd.org](http://www.mci-nwd.org).

These study guides invite people of faith to explore the current nuclear weapons situation in the context of a community. The sessions consider three theological themes common to Christianity and Islam: God as the Creator who places us within creation, our common calling to love God and one another, and God's invitation to envision peace and live as peace-builders.

Those involved in designing the study guides come from the Protestant Christian tradition, but the sessions are intended for use in a variety of settings. They may be used by Protestant, Muslim, and Catholic groups or in interfaith settings.

Each session contains a suggested format for a one-hour study. While the three sessions flow sequentially, any one of them may be used as a stand-alone unit.

The sessions serve as a beginning. Participants are encouraged to share additional ideas with each other and to identify further steps for reflection and action.

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** Advance preparation is needed for the sessions. Be sure to read the material in advance and follow or adapt the suggestions for advance preparation.

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## Caring for God's Creation in a Nuclear Age

Rationale: Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants believe in one Creator who set the planets in motion and entrusts the earth to our care. Our common commitment to care for creation compels us to address the damage to humanity and the desecration of the earth that occur through the development and use of nuclear weapons.

### Objectives:

- to consider Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant statements on the value of creation
- to explore connections between the use of nuclear weapons and damage to human beings and the earth, using the bombing of Hiroshima as a case study
- to find a moral and ethical voice that responds to the threat nuclear weapons pose to God's creation

### Outcomes:

- in hearing Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant statements on the value of creation, participants will place these traditions in conversation with one another
- participants will better understand how nuclear weapons threaten the well-being of creation
- participants will practice dialogue, using the language of faith and values to talk about the threat nuclear weapons pose to our shared earth

**Materials Needed:** copies of “the memories of children” (see Exercise 2, one memory per sheet), pencils, paper, newsprint, markers, tape and an offering basket.

### Advance Preparations:

**Preparing for Exercise 1:** Write the quotations listed below, under “Introducing Creation” on newsprint and post around the room.

**Preparing for Exercise 2:** Record each of the memories of children who experienced the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (listed under “Exercise 2: Nuclear Destruction of Creation”) on a separate piece of paper (one memory per sheet).

**Preparing for Exercise 3:** Make copies of the responsive closing prayer for each participant.

**Exercise 1:** (15 minutes)**Opening Prayer**

All compassionate and most merciful God, the source of all peace, we give thanks for your creative work in fashioning the world around us. For the earth, which yields good fruit, we give you thanks. For humankind, whom you created in your image, we give you thanks. For all that has life and breath, we thank you, O God, and ask that you grant us wisdom on the journey, that we might seek peace together. In your holy and beloved name we pray, Amen.

**Introducing Creation**

*Instructions: Invite participants to move around the room, read each posted text, then stand or sit beside the statement that best expresses their understanding of creation. When everyone has selected a statement, invite participants to introduce themselves to the group, explaining why they have chosen a particular text. Introduce yourself, and the text you have chosen, to the group.*

**Statements**

(Allah) Most Gracious!

It is He Who has taught the Qur'an.

He has created man:

He has taught him speech (and intelligence).

The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed;

And the herbs and the trees - both (alike) bow in adoration.

And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice),

In order that ye may not transgress (due) balance.

So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance.

It is He Who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures:

Therein is fruit and date-palms, producing spathes (enclosing dates);

Also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder, and sweet-smelling plants.

Qur'an 55:1-12

“The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows cloth themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.” Psalm 65:12, 13

“God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church 340

“Of all the known forms of life, only about 10% are still living today. All other forms—fantastic plants, living animals with unimaginably various wings, tails, teeth—are utterly and forever gone. That is a great many forms that have been created. The Creator goes off on one wild, specific tangent after another, or millions simultaneously...the Creator loves exuberance.” Annie Dillard

**Exercise 2: Nuclear Destruction of Creation**

*NOTE TO FACILITATOR: Violence is a theme we will explore at length in this session. Personal experiences with violence may surface as we discuss the violence of war. Pay attention to the group to determine when a break might be needed. Also inform participants that they should feel free to take a break any time they need one.*

**Hiroshima Through the Eyes of Children (15 minutes)**

*Instructions: Distribute the memories of children who experienced the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Provide the following introduction. Invite the participants who received the memories to read them aloud. After the readings, invite the participants to reflect on what they heard during a moment of silence.*

**Facilitator Introduction:** Whether we are Muslim, Catholic, or Protestant, our faith compels us to care for God’s good creation. We all believe in one Creator, who established the dignity and sanctity of life. The development and use of nuclear weapons threatens those precious things that God has created. At 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, the world’s first atomic bomb used in warfare exploded over Hiroshima, Japan. The city burned and hundreds of thousands of people died. Many who survived suffered psychological, spiritual, and bodily trauma. Listen to the memories of children who experienced the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

- “A dragonfly flitted in front of me and stopped on a fence. I stood up, took my cap in my hands, and was about to catch the dragonfly when...”
- “Grandfather was tending the many trees and potted plants in his yard. I was riding my tricycle barefooted, when...”
- “I left the house in high spirits, grasping the money my mother had given me for ice candy, when...”
- “Mother was ironing father’s good shirts in the living room. I sat next to her. There was a big roar as an airplane flew right over our house. ‘It’s so low, it makes me nervous,’ she said. Just then...”<sup>1</sup>

**Mini Session:**

*Instructions: Invite participants to find a partner, choosing someone in the group they do not know well. Ask each pair to identify a partner A and partner B. Partner A will listen first while partner B speaks for 2 minutes, uninterrupted, in response to this question: What are your thoughts and feelings about these childhood memories? After two minutes, allow a few seconds of complete silence to ensure everyone has finished, then partner A will speak and partner B will listen for two minutes. After both partners have had a chance to speak, invite the participants to return to the larger group and briefly discuss: What did you notice about these memories? What feelings did they stir in you?*

**Black Rain: (15 minutes)**

*Instructions: Read the following statements about the bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath. Then discuss the questions listed below.*

“After the explosion, fierce firestorms and whirlwinds appeared as the conflagration engulfed the city. Approximately 20-30 minutes after the explosion, heavy rain fell on the northwestern areas of the city. Though it was midsummer, the temperature fell sharply during this rainfall...”

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of Hiroshima*, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1999), p. 36-37.

Worse still, the large drops of black rain during the first 1-2 hours contained mud and dust stirred up during the explosion, as well as soot from the fires. The black rain was therefore highly radioactive, causing fish in ponds and rivers to die and float to the surface...Not knowing it was radioactive, people opened their mouths and drank the falling black rain...The black rain was sticky and left black spotted patterns on the clothing of those who were caught in it.”<sup>2</sup>

### Discussion Questions:

1. How did black rain affect God’s creation in Hiroshima?
2. From a moral or ethical perspective, is it ever possible to justify the use of nuclear weapons, given their unique propensity for destruction and contamination of God’s creation? Why or why not?

### Exercise 3: Closing Ritual and Prayer (15 minutes)

*Instructions: Invite participants to gather in a circle, if they are not already seated in that fashion. Distribute pencils and paper. Invite participants to write a prayer for the victims and survivors of Hiroshima, their families, and all of God’s creatures affected by the testing and use of nuclear weapons.<sup>3</sup> Use or adapt the following words to introduce the exercise. After the closing prayer, thank participants for being a part of this study.*

**Facilitator:** As people of faith, we can offer prayer on behalf of all of God’s people and creatures who have been harmed by the manufacture, testing, and use of nuclear weapons. I invite you to write a prayer on the paper you have received. After we have had a few minutes to write, I will lead us in the responsive closing prayer; then we will go around the circle and place our prayers in this offering basket. You may read your prayer to the group or simply put it in the basket and say, “Amen.” As each of us places our prayer in the basket, I invite all of us to respond, “God have mercy,” or “Allah have mercy.”

### Closing Prayer:

**One:** In the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful. Praise be to the God of the universe, keeper of the atoms and stars, who made us collaborators in creation. We have squandered the secrets of ordered existence and justified their immoral use in the name of “security.” We know the consequences, but we are complacent in silence.

**Many: God have mercy.**

**One:** We have misused the glue of the universe. We have stockpiled weapons of mass destruction. Fear and presumption have driven us to the brink of annihilating untold lives, making places on the earth inhabitable.

**Many: Allah have mercy.**

**One:** Open our eyes to see how the destruction of your creation diminishes all. Heal the wounds ripped open by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mend the fabric of the human family. Will in us never to repeat this evil.

**Many: God have mercy.<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> This exercise comes from “Weapons and the World,” *Faith Seeking Peace*, Women’s Action for New Directions (www.faithwand.org, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> This prayer is adapted from “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Worship and Prayer Resources for August 6,” Daniel Benedict (The General Board of Discipleship: United Methodist Church, 2005), [http://www.gbod.org/worship/default\\_body.asp?act=reader&item\\_id=14517#prayers](http://www.gbod.org/worship/default_body.asp?act=reader&item_id=14517#prayers)

# Love of God, Love of Neighbor in a Nuclear Age

Rationale: Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants believe in one God who created humanity to live in peaceful co-existence with one another as a part of God's creative diversity. We honor God when we respect human dignity and the sanctity of human life. Nuclear weapons contradict this kind of faithful living, because their use kills civilians, scars the earth, and harms unborn generations.

## Objectives:

- to map the nuclear nations in our world today
- to highlight the ties that bind us to the people of other nations
- to hear from those who survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima
- to discuss the costs of nuclear weapons from a faith perspective

## Outcomes:

- participants will learn which nations in our world possess nuclear weapons and the extent of each nation's nuclear arsenal
- participants will consider the ways in which their faith compels them to be mindful of, and compassionate toward, the people of other nations
- participants will consider the human stories behind nuclear war in light of the love ethic of their religious tradition
- participants will weigh the costs of nuclear weapons and war against the myriad ways in which we are called to care for the most vulnerable

**Materials needed:** list of nine nuclear nations, ball of yarn, "Personal Stories" handout (see below), a watch or stopwatch, "Cost of Nuclear Weapons" handout (see below), newsprint, markers, and tape

## Advance Preparations

### Preparing for Exercise 1:

The nine nuclear nations are: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, the People's Republic of China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea .

Cut nine lengths of yarn, each one representing the nuclear arsenal of a nation. Cut the lengths in proportion to the percentage of the world's nuclear arsenal held by that nation. For each length of yarn, create a card that tells which nation it represents and the percentage. See Box 1 to obtain the information on the percentage.

**Preparing for Exercise 2:**

Photocopy the “Personal Stories” handout found below so that each participant can have a handout of the stories.

Post the texts below on newsprint around the room:

- O humankind, We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is the one who is the most righteous of you. Qur'an 49:13
- One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first commandment is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second commandment is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:28-31
- If the consciousness of universal brotherhood (and sisterhood) truly penetrates into the hearts of (humankind), will they still need to arm themselves to the point of becoming blind and fanatic killers...and of perpetrating...butchery of untold magnitude, as at Hiroshima on August 6, 1945? —Pope Paul VI
- God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. —Micah 4:3

**Preparing for Exercise 3:** Photocopy the “Costs of Nuclear Weapons” handout found below for each participant.

**Exercise 1: Mapping the Nuclear World Today** (20 minutes)

**Opening Prayer**

All compassionate and most merciful God, the source of all love, we give thanks that you created us to be companions for one another. For the many nations and tribes which reflect your creative diversity, we give you thanks. For this opportunity to enter into peaceful dialogue with one another, we give you thanks, O God. Show us how to better love all of your children that we might honor the sanctity of human life together. In your holy and beloved name we pray, Amen.

## Web of Connectedness

*Instructions:*

- *The nuclear nations of our world today are: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, the People's Republic of China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea .*
- *Ask participants to name the nine nuclear nations. As each nation is named, ask the participant who named the nation to stand up and hold a ball of yarn, then to pass it along to the next person who names a nuclear nation.*
- *At the end of the exercise, nine participants should be standing, holding what looks like a web of yarn, each strand connecting one nation to the next. Participants can lay this "nuclear web" on the floor and return to their seats to participate in discussion questions.*

*Discussion Questions:* What ties bind us to people in other nations? As people of faith, how do we articulate these ties? How do those ties affect our living?

## Nuclear Arsenals

*Instructions:*

- *Note that the nuclear weapons states own a combined arsenal numbering approximately 16,700 warheads. Explain that you have nine lengths of yarn, each representing the nuclear arsenal of a nation.*
- *Ask nine participants to come forward, one at a time, to choose a card and a length of yarn. Each participant is to read the name of a nuclear nation, display the length of yarn, and to tell what percentage of the world's nuclear arsenal that nation is likely to hold.*
- *After each participant has read the card, note: The nuclear weapons states listed above own a combined arsenal numbering approximately 16,700 warheads. The overwhelming majority of those warheads – 95% – are held by the United States and Russia, with the United States having 10,000 active and reserve warheads. Put another way, the U.S. nuclear arsenal is 100 times larger than China's. More than 15 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the old superpower rivals still maintain stockpiles sufficient to destroy most of the planet. The next tier of nuclear weapons states (Britain, France, China, Israel) are thought to have between one and three hundred warheads each, and the relative newcomers to the nuclear club (India, Pakistan, possibly North Korea) likely have fewer than 50 each.*

*Discussion Questions:* How do you react to learning about the nuclear arsenals of the world? How does our faith call us to responsible citizenship in this situation? As responsible citizens of the U.S., how do you feel called to respond to the disproportionate number of nuclear weapons held by our nation?

## Exercise 2: Personal Stories from Hiroshima (20 minutes)

*NOTE TO FACILITATOR:* Violence is a theme we will explore at length in this session. Personal experiences with violence may surface as we discuss the violence of war. Pay attention to the group to see if a break is needed. Inform participants that they should feel free to take a break any time they need one.

*Instructions:* Provide the "Personal Stories" handout to each participant, and ask for five volunteers to read it aloud.

*Instructions:*

- *Call the participants' attention to the faith statements displayed around the room. Invite the participants to reflect silently on what they heard in light of the faith statements.*
- *Ask participants to break up into pairs with someone they do not know well, and ask each pair to identify a partner A and partner B. Partner A will listen first while partner B speaks for 2 minutes, uninterrupted, in response to the question below.*
- *After two minutes, allow a few seconds of complete silence to ensure everyone has finished, then partner A will speak and partner B will listen for two minutes.*

*Discussion Question:* In light of these faith statements, how do you respond to the personal stories of the survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima?

**Exercise 3: The Costs of Nuclear Weapons** (20 minutes)

*Instructions:*

- *Provide each participant with the handout "The Cost of Nuclear Weapons."*
- *Ask for volunteers to read each section.*
- *Follow the reading with the discussion questions listed below.*
- *End with the closing prayer.*

*Discussion Questions:* Who pays for nuclear war and waste? How does our allocation of resources to fund nuclear weapons affect our children and the next generation? The poor? Communities of color? Which of the above costs do you as an individual feel most deeply and lament the most? How might your community of faith acknowledge this lament together each year on August 6<sup>th</sup>?

**Closing Prayer:**

One: In the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful. Praise be to the God of all nations, who created us to be in right relationship with one another. O God, today we gather to consider how we might love our neighbors in this violent world. We lament the many ways in which we have acted with violence toward one another. God, in your mercy,

**Many: hear our prayer.**

One: We confess that each of us is complicit with the brokenness that infects our world, and so we ask for grace, forgiveness, and healing. We confess that our nation spends more money on war and weaponry than any other nation in the world. We confess that too often we respond to violence with more violence. Allah, in your mercy,

**Many: hear our prayer.**

One: Guide us, we pray, in the ways that make for peace. Grant us an abundance of compassion, that we might look at those who are called enemies and see them anew with the eyes of mercy. Help us to raise our children into wisdom, that they might transform this world with your justice and your peace.

**Many: Amen.**

*Note: Handouts for this study guide follow.*

**Nuclear Warheads: Who Owns Them<sup>1</sup>**  
(Of the approximately 16,700 nuclear warheads)

<b>Country</b>	<b>% of Warheads</b>
U.S.	60%
Russia	35%
UK	1%
France	1%
PRC	1%
Israel	1%
India	<1%
Pakistan	<1%
N. Korea	<1%

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission from *The Muslim-Christian Study and Action Guide on the Nuclear Weapons Danger*, The Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Danger.

## *Personal Stories*

**READER 1:** *14 year old Akihiro Takahashi was standing in line at school with his fellow students when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. He remembers:*

“We saw the B-29 approaching and about to fly over us. All of us were looking up to the sky, pointing out the aircraft. Then the teachers came out from the school building and the class leaders gave the command to fall in...That was the moment when the blast came. And then the tremendous noise came and we were left in the dark...Everything collapsed for as far as I could see. I felt the city of Hiroshima had disappeared all of a sudden. Then I looked at myself and found my clothes had turned into rags due to the heat. I was...burned at the back of the head, on my back, on both arms and both legs...Automatically I began to walk heading west because that was the direction of my home. After a while, I noticed somebody calling my name. I looked around and found a friend of mine who lived in my town and was studying at the same school. His name was Yamamoto. He was badly burnt just like myself. We walked toward the river. And on the way we saw many victims...And finally we reached the river bank. At the same moment, a fire broke out...If we had been slower by even one second, we would have been killed by the fire. Fire was blowing into the sky...There was a small wooden bridge left, which had not been destroyed by the blast. I went over to the other side of the river using that bridge. But Yamamoto was not with me any more. He was lost somewhere. I remember I crossed the river by myself and on the other side, I purged myself into the water three times. The heat was tremendous. And I felt like my body was burning all over. For my burning body, the cold water of the river was as precious as [a] treasure.

**READER 2:** Then I left the river, and I walked along the railroad tracks in the direction of my home. On the way, I ran into another friend of mine, Tokujiro Hatta...the soles of his feet were badly burnt...I could not go home ignoring him. I made him crawl using his arms and knees. Next, I made him stand on his heels and I supported him. We walked heading toward my home repeating the two methods. When we were resting because we were so exhausted, I found my grandfather's brother and his wife...coming toward us. That was quite [a] coincidence. [We] have a proverb about meeting Buddha in Hell. My encounter with my relatives at that time was just like that. They seem[ed] to be the Buddha to me wandering in the living hell.

**READER 3:** Afterwards I was under medical treatment for one year and a half, and I miraculously recovered. Out of sixty junior high school classmates, only ten of us are alive today. Yamamoto and Hatta soon died from the acute radiation disease. The radiation corroded their bodies and killed them. I myself am still alive on this earth, suffering after-effects of the bomb. I have to see regularly an ear doctor, an eye doctor, a dermatologist and a surgeon. I feel uneasy about my health every day...Anyway I'm alive today together with nine of my classmates for these forty years. I've been living believing that we can never waste the depth of the victims. I've been living on, dragging my body full of sickness, and from time to time I question myself. I wonder if it is worth living in such hardship and pain, and I become desperate. But in time I manage to pull myself together and I tell myself once my life was saved, I should fulfill my mission as a survivor. In other words, it has been and it is my belief that those who survived must continue to talk

about our experiences...Throughout my life, I would like to fulfill this mission by talking about my experience both here, in Japan, and overseas.”<sup>2</sup>

**READER 4:** *Kikue Tada became a nurse at the age of 16. She tended soldiers on battlefields in the Pacific during World War II. At age 20, she tried to help heal those wounded by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In The Scars Remain she writes:*

“Hiroshima—a city proud of its abundant greenery, blue skies, and its seven rivers forming a beautiful delta—was converted in an instant to scorched earth by the atomic bomb. Even now...I cannot forget the scenes I saw then, scenes beyond the power of pen or tongue to describe. I recall a screaming baby trying to nurse at the breast of its already dead mother. Could there possibly be any scene more inhuman than this?”

**READER 5:** Though I was subjected to massive doses of secondary radiation while at the hospital, I still hoped to lead a normal, happy life, and eventually I got married. Not long afterward, however, I began suffering from damage to my liver, kidneys, and abdomen. I had two operations on my ovaries. I became feverish and nauseous. Because I was constantly in and out of the hospital, my husband and I got a divorce. Physically frail and with two dear daughters to raise by myself, I sometimes thought of suicide. But each time the children would encourage me by saying we would be all right if we all worked together.

Every year on August 6, great crowds of people gather in the Peace Park in Hiroshima. I wonder if they really understand what we victims feel. Can their prayers really contribute to worldwide peace? I have my doubts. But, as one of the few remaining victims of the bombing, I intend to go on telling my story as long as there is life left in me.”<sup>3</sup>

**READER 1:** *Isao Kita was a 33 year old weatherman for the Hiroshima District Weather Bureau on August 6, 1945. He continued to observe the weather even after he was exposed to the blast. He notes:*

“I was in the receiving room and I was facing northward. I noticed the flashing light. It was not really a big flash. But still it drew my attention. In a few seconds, the heat wave arrived. After I noticed the flash, white clouds spread over the blue sky. It was amazing. It was as if blue morning-glories had suddenly bloomed up in the sky...Then came the heat wave. It was very, very hot. Even though there was a window glass in front of me, I felt really hot. It was as if I was looking directly into a kitchen oven. I couldn’t bear the heat for a long time. Then I heard the cracking sound. I don’t know what made that sound, but probably it came from the air which suddenly expanded in the room. By that time, I realized that the bomb had been dropped. As I had been instructed, I pushed aside the chair and lay with my face on the floor. Also as I had been instructed during the frequent emergency exercises, I covered my eyes and ears...And I started to count. You may feel that I was rather heartless just to start counting. But for us, who observed the weather, it is a duty to record the process of time, of various phenomena. So I started counting with the light flash. When I counted to five seconds, I heard the groaning sound. At the same time, the window glass was blown off and the building shook from the bomb blast. So the blast reached that place about five seconds after the explosion...”

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted with permission from *The Muslim-Christian Study and Action Guide on the Nuclear Weapons Danger*, The Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Danger.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.inicom.com/hibakusha/akihiro.html>, 9/18/06.

**READER 2:** And on that day, a large number of injured persons walked this way along the path toward the Omi Hospital. They were bleeding all over and some of them had no clothes. Many of them were carrying people on their shoulders. Looking at the injured, I realized how seriously the town had been damaged...It thundered ten times between 10 and 11 o'clock...When I looked down on the town from the top of that hill, I could see that the city was completely lost. The city turned...the color of the yellow desert...After about five minutes, fire broke out here and there. The fire gradually grew bigger and there was smoke everywhere and so we could no longer see towards the town...The smoke from the fire, it was like a screen dividing the city into two parts. The sun was shining brightly just like it was the middle of the summer over here on this side. And behind the cloud on the other side, it was completely dark...

**READER 3:** Rain fell quite heavily over a period of several hours. It was a black and sticky rain. It stuck to everything. When it fell on trees and leaves, it stayed and turned everything black. When it fell on people's clothing, the clothing turned black. It also stuck on people's hands and feet. And it couldn't be washed off. ... The atomic bomb does not discriminate. Of course, those...fighting may have to suffer. But the atomic bomb kills everyone from little babies to old people. And it's not an easy death. It's a very cruel and very painful way to die. I think that this cannot be allowed to happen again anywhere in the world. I don't say this just because I'm a Japanese atomic bomb survivor. I feel that people all over the world must speak out."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kikue Tada, "The Scars Remain," *Her War Story* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 235-239.

## *The Costs of Nuclear Weapons*

### **The Human Costs**

1. **Hiroshima:** Hiroshima City estimates that about 140,000 died from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and related acute disorders within five months of the bombing.<sup>5</sup>
  
2. **Environmental Racism:** Environmental racism is the concept that adverse environmental impacts disproportionately affect communities of color or low-income populations. “Nuclear weapons are the product of highly enriched uranium and the plutonium that can be processed from it. Most mining and milling of uranium ore is done on the lands of indigenous peoples: Hopi and Navajo lands in the Southwest United States, Cree land in Northern Canada, Aboriginal lands in Australia, and Tribal Homelands in South Africa.”<sup>6</sup> Yucca Mountain, which was the proposed repository for 98% of the radioactive waste generated during the nuclear age, lies in the heart of the Western Shoshone nation and holds great spiritual significance for the Shoshone and Paiute people. This plan was eventually abandoned. Every proposal to store radioactive, nuclear waste in North America has targeted native territories.<sup>7</sup> “Communities of color bear a disproportionate share of the risks and health effects caused by radiation released during mining and milling. The uranium fuel made from this ore for commercial reactors is processed in plants often located intentionally in communities of color, mostly African-American.”<sup>8</sup> At the Savannah River Site, a former nuclear production plant which currently stores radioactive waste, former employees who have been exposed to radioactivity are disproportionately African American.<sup>9</sup>
  
3. **Unborn Generations:** Pregnant women and unborn children are uniquely vulnerable to radiation, which can cross the placenta and result in malformation, mental retardation, and radiation-induced cancer.<sup>10</sup> Many in-utero survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima were born with microcephaly, a condition that produces abnormally small heads and includes mental and physical disorders. Others were stillborn. Even among those babies born without obvious problems, a higher than normal death rate was observed.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Cost in Dollars**

1. **U.S. federal budget:** Taxpayers in the United States will pay \$17 billion for nuclear weapons in FY2007. The same amount of money could provide health care for over 3.8 million people or construct more than 150,000 affordable housing units.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.inicom.com/hibakusha/isao.html>, 9/18/06.

<sup>6</sup> *The Spirit of Hiroshima*, by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> David Robinson, “The Racism at the Core of US Nuclear Weapons Policy,” *CommonDreams.org*, 5/15/05.

<sup>8</sup> “Nuclear Waste + Native Lands = Environmental Racism,” <http://www.nirs.org/alerts/10-24-2000/1>, 10/24/00.

<sup>9</sup> David Robinson, “The Racism at the Core of US Nuclear Weapons Policy,” *CommonDreams.org*, 5/15/05.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.shundahai.org/BASE\\_contact\\_info.htm](http://www.shundahai.org/BASE_contact_info.htm), 9/18/06.

<sup>11</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radioprotection/publication/100\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radioprotection/publication/100_en.htm), 9/18/06.

<sup>12</sup> *The Spirit of Hiroshima*, p. 73.

2. **Clean up of nuclear waste:** The cost of cleaning up eleven U.S. nuclear sites is estimated at \$152.1 billion between now and 2070.<sup>13</sup>

### **Other Costs Experienced in Hiroshima**

1. **City Infrastructure:** 80 percent of the city of Hiroshima was completely destroyed<sup>14</sup> by the atomic bombing, including major thoroughfares, railways and streetcars, communications, and electricity.<sup>15</sup>
2. **Education and Health Care Systems:** In Hiroshima, schools throughout the city were used to house refugees and the wounded. Of the 41 schools in the city, only 11 still had serviceable buildings after the bombing. "Open-air classrooms were created in school yards and public buildings."<sup>16</sup> The Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital was diminished to a fire-gutted shell, and 85 percent of the staff were killed or injured. Because the injured could not travel far, emergency relief stations sprung up wherever they gathered, 53 stations in all.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <http://database.nationalpriorities.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/nppdatabase.woa/2/wo/UjWDA8dAuHpbnfJJSY5rvw/0.0.1.1.6.1,9/18/06>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa050700b.htm>, 9/18/06.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.answers.com/topic/hiroshima>, 9/18/06.

<sup>16</sup> *The Spirit of Hiroshima*, p. 82.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

## Envisioning Peace

Rationale: Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants alike share a common father of faith, Abraham, who welcomed the “other” with peaceful hospitality. We are called to do likewise—to open ourselves to the stranger, even the enemy, to honor the sacred in the many tribes and nations God has created, and to live into God’s realm of peace. Participants are challenged to envision how peace might be possible in the nuclear age.

### Objectives:

- to explore the meanings of the Hebrew word, *shalom*, the Arabic word, *salaam*, and the English word, *peace*.
- to share our visions of a peaceful world.
- to consider how we might offer Abraham’s extravagant hospitality to the stranger, the other, and even the enemy.
- to explore a timeline of the nuclear age and discuss the impact of nuclear weapons on our present day.

### Outcomes:

- participants will identify components of a world experiencing *shalom/salaam*.
- participants will connect the theological theme of welcoming the “other” with our responsibility, as a nation, to talk peacefully with other nuclear nations.
- participants will increase their knowledge of the events of the nuclear age and articulate ways to move toward nuclear disarmament today.

### Materials needed:

Definitions of *shalom* and *salaam* (provided below) photocopied and cut into slips of paper, with one definition on each slip, newsprint, markers, blank paper (optional), crayons or colored pencils (optional), pieces of construction paper, each with one of the following dates written on it: 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, the “nuclear timeline” (provided below), with each date/event on a separate slip of paper.

### Advance Preparations

#### Preparing for Exercise 1:

1. Photocopy the definitions of *shalom* and *salaam* provided below and cut them into three slips of paper, with one definition on each slip.

2. The second discussion question can also function as a “drawing question,” meaning you can provide participants with blank paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils, and ask them to draw their vision of a world filled with *shalom* and *salaam*. If you choose this option, offer participants five minutes to draw, then invite each person to display and explain their drawing.

### Preparing for Exercise 3:

1. Post pieces of construction paper, each with a date (i.e. 1940) printed on it, in chronological order along a wall, creating a timeline from 1940–2000.
2. Photocopy the timeline provided below, and cut it up so that each date/event is on one slip of paper. Also keep a copy of the entire timeline for yourself.

### Exercise 1: Shalom/Salaam (15 minutes)

#### Opening Prayer

All compassionate and most merciful God, the source of all peace, we give thanks that you created us as many nations, yet one body. Illumine for us the path of peace, though it is difficult to tread. Teach us words and ways that make for peace, that our children might learn to see the sacred in all beings. Renew a right spirit within us, that peace might reside within our hearts, and at the very heart of our families, communities, and nations. Amen.

#### Definitions of Shalom

*Instructions: Invite volunteers to each read one of the definitions of shalom or salaam. Then invite the group to respond to the discussion questions.*

Shalom:

“Used as a traditional Jewish greeting or farewell.”<sup>1</sup>

“The word *shalom* comes from the word *shalem*, meaning complete, all parts together.” —Rabbi Yisroel Miller

“Shalom is a Hebrew word that means peace, healing, and wholeness; it means to be fulfilled or complete...shalom is always expressed most fully in relationship with others.” —Rabbi Tirzah Firestone

Salaam:

“A ceremonial act of deference or obeisance, especially a low bow performed while placing the right palm on the forehead.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.answers.com/topic/shalom](http://www.answers.com/topic/shalom), .

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.answers.com/topic/salaam>, .

“A term derived from the same root as that in ‘Islam,’ which conveys several meanings such as peace, safety, and salvation.”<sup>3</sup>

“Salaam is a state of being characterized by the inner tranquility and social harmony that result when the particular will of the human being is subordinated to the universal will of the divine. When used with the article ‘al,’ i.e. al-salaam, it is the name or attribute of God, for God is the Peace.” —Louay Safi, Islamic Society of North America

### Discussion Questions:

1. How do these definitions of *shalom* and *salaam* compare to the meaning of the English word *peace*?
2. When you envision a world filled with *shalom/salaam*, what do you see? (*Note: This question can be used as a discussion question, or a drawing question. To invite participants to draw a world filled with shalom/salaam, simply distribute paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Give participants five minutes to draw, then invite each person to display and describe their drawing.*)

### Exercise 2: Welcoming the Stranger (20 minutes)

*Instructions: Ask two participants to each read aloud one of the texts below. Read the “facilitator introduction.” Then guide participants through dialogue on the discussion questions.*

### A Shared Story:

“Our messengers came to Abraham with good news. They said, ‘Peace!’ and he answered, ‘Peace!’ He did not delay in bringing them a roasted calf to eat.” —Sura 11:69

“God appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, ‘My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.’ So they said, ‘Do as you have said.’” —Genesis 18:1-5

**Facilitator Introduction:** The Muslim, Jewish, and Christian traditions share the story of three strangers arriving at the tent of Abraham in the heat of the day. According to tradition, Abraham’s tent was open in all four directions, so that travelers could be welcomed in, no matter the direction from which they came.<sup>4</sup> Welcoming the stranger, who might be a messenger from God, is an important spiritual theme we’ll explore further with these discussion questions.

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<sup>3</sup> www.google.com (search for “salaam”), .

<sup>4</sup> Joan Chittister, Murshid Saadi Shakur Chishti, and Arthur Waskow, *The Tent of Abraham* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), p. 199.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. When have you experienced welcome and hospitality when you were a “stranger?”
2. Which “strangers” traveling in our midst do we have difficulty welcoming with Abraham’s extravagant hospitality?
3. How can welcoming the “other” (someone who does not look, talk, or act like ourselves) create space for shalom? Create space for God’s presence among us?
4. The call into peaceful dialogue with the “other” is a hallmark of Islam and Christianity. How, as people of faith, might we call for peaceful dialogue among nuclear nations, even those considered the “enemy?”

**Exercise 3: A Nuclear Timeline** (25 minutes)*Instructions:*

- *Distribute the timeline slips to participants, each participant may have several. Explain that you will be exploring a nuclear timeline.*
- *As you call out each date in chronological order, invite the participant who has that date to step forward and read the event associated with that date. After each participant has read the event, they can post the event along the timeline on the wall.*
- *After all events have been read aloud, guide participants through the discussion questions, and close with prayer.*

August 2, 1939: Albert Einstein sends a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt informing him of German atomic research and the potential for a bomb. This letter prompts Roosevelt to form a special committee to investigate the military implications of atomic research.<sup>5</sup>

August 6, 1945: The United States drops the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The uranium bomb is named Little Boy, and kills between 80,000 – 140,000 people.<sup>6</sup>

August 9, 1945: The United States drops Fat Man, a plutonium bomb, on Nagasaki. About 74,000 people are killed.<sup>7</sup>

July of 1946: The United States tests a nuclear bomb on Bikini Atoll, an island in the Pacific. Four days later bikini swimsuits debut at a French fashion show.<sup>8</sup>

August 8, 1953: Soviet Premier Georgi Malenkov announces that the USSR possesses the hydrogen bomb. It is tested nine months later. The development of the hydrogen bomb in the United States and the Soviet Union is regarded as the start of the Cold War arms race.<sup>9</sup>

July 9, 1955: The Russell-Einstein Manifesto states: “In view of the fact that in any future world war nuclear weapons will certainly be employed, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind, we urge the governments of the world...to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html>, .

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Timeline/Timeline.shtml>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> <http://web.em.doe.gov/timeline/>, .

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

1957: The Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE) is founded and launches its first ad in the New York Times.<sup>11</sup>

July of 1957: The United Nations establishes the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy.<sup>12</sup> Bertrand Russell initiates the first in a series of Pugwash conferences, bringing together scientists from both sides of the Cold War.<sup>13</sup>

1961: SANE hosts an eight day, 109 mile march from McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey to UN Plaza. International sponsors of SANE—including Martin Buber, Pablo Casals, Bertrand Russell, and Albert Schweitzer—petition President Kennedy to maintain a moratorium on testing in the atmosphere.<sup>14</sup>

October 16-29, 1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis occurs, the closest the world has ever come to nuclear war.<sup>15</sup>

April 11, 1963: The Vatican releases the Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII which calls for an end to the nuclear arms race.<sup>16</sup>

March 5, 1970: The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), signed at Washington, Moscow, and London, enters into force.<sup>17</sup> The NPT commits non nuclear nations that sign it not to acquire nuclear weapons. It commits the nuclear nations that sign it to dismantle their nuclear weapons. India, Israel, and Pakistan have not signed the treaty. North Korea signed and later rescinded its signature.<sup>18</sup>

May 26, 1972: The first round of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) ends with President Richard Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signing the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM).<sup>19</sup>

June 3, 1980: A 46-cent computer chip fails, causing the mistaken detection of a Soviet missile attack by the NORAD system. About 100 B-52 bombers are readied for take off along with the President's airborne command post before the error is detected.<sup>20</sup>

December of 1980: The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (also known as Superfund) is passed in response to the discovery of a large number of abandoned, leaking hazardous waste dumps. Under Superfund, the Environmental Protection Agency identifies hazardous sites, takes appropriate action, and sees that the responsible party pays for the cleanup.<sup>21</sup>

1981: The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign is founded in D.C.<sup>22</sup> In England, women set up a peace camp at the US Air Force Base at Greenham Common, eventually organizing more than 30,000 women to surround the base.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.peace-action.org/abt/timeline.html>

<sup>12</sup> [www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html](http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html)

<sup>13</sup> <http://san.beck.org/GPJ29-AntiNuclearProtests.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.peace-action.org/abt/timeline.html>

<sup>15</sup> [www.atomicarchive.com/Timeline/Timeline.shtml](http://www.atomicarchive.com/Timeline/Timeline.shtml)

<sup>16</sup> [www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html](http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> [disarmament2.un.org/wmd/npt/](http://disarmament2.un.org/wmd/npt/)

<sup>19</sup> [www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html](http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.peace-action.org/abt/timeline.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://san.beck.org/GPJ29-AntiNuclearProtests.html>

July 20, 1982: President Ronald Reagan removes the United States from the ongoing Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Talks in Geneva. This action ends two decades of negotiations.<sup>24</sup>

1982: 18 million Americans vote on Nuclear Freeze Initiatives. 60% vote in favor of the Freeze.<sup>25</sup>

1983: The Nuclear Freeze resolution passes the House of Representatives.<sup>26</sup>

September of 1988: At a meeting of senior political aides, President F.W. de Klerk declares that in order to end South Africa's isolation from the international community, both apartheid and the nuclear weapons program must be dismantled.<sup>27</sup>

January 3, 1993: President George Bush and President Boris Yeltsin sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II), which reduces their nations' arsenals of long range nuclear weapons to 3000-3500 weapons.<sup>28</sup>

December 7, 1993: The U.S. Department of Energy reveals that the United States conducted 204 secret underground nuclear tests over a 45 year period. These bring the total number of U.S. nuclear tests to 1051. The DOE also reveals that the U.S. deliberately exposed some Americans to dangerous levels of radiation in medical experiments without their consent.<sup>29</sup>

August 14, 1996: Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons finds that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all states, including the nuclear states. One month later, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is opened for signatures.<sup>30</sup> The CTBT has currently not received the needed signatures to enter into force.<sup>31</sup>

September 11, 2001: Terrorists hijack planes and crash them into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. President Bush declares a "war on terrorism."<sup>32</sup>

December 13, 2001: The United States officially announces that it will withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM).<sup>33</sup>

December 11, 2002: Release of the document entitled *U.S. Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* sets forth new commitments to use nuclear weapons to counter attacks by chemical or biological agents.<sup>34</sup>

May 2003: The U.S. 1993 Spratt-Furse Amendment is repealed, lifting restrictions on U.S. research and development of low-yield nuclear weapons.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html](http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html)

<sup>25</sup> <http://san.beck.org/GPJ29-AntiNuclearProtests.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.peace-action.org/abt/timeline.html>

<sup>27</sup> [www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html](http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> [disarmament.un.org/TreatyStatus.nsf](http://disarmament.un.org/TreatyStatus.nsf).

<sup>32</sup> [www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html](http://www.middlepowers.org/dpe/timeline.html)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

January of 2004: Libya ratifies the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).<sup>36</sup>

March 2, 2006: The United States and India seal a civilian nuclear cooperation pact.<sup>37</sup>

October 9, 2006: North Korea announces that it has tested a nuclear weapon.

October 19, 2006: The Department of Energy announces Complex 2030, a multi-billion dollar program designed to consolidate nuclear weapons facilities, build a hydrogen bomb factory, and develop new nuclear weapons.<sup>38</sup>

### Discussion Questions:

1. What do you notice in the nuclear age timeline?
2. What surprises you?
3. What appears to be missing?
4. What trends can you identify by looking at this timeline?
5. How are the events of the timeline affected by the social and political context in which they occur?
6. According to the Muslim-Christian Study and Action Guide on the Nuclear Weapons Danger, “After Hiroshima, nuclear weapons did not spread rapidly as every expert predicted. Indeed, the rate of proliferation has actually *declined*, and fewer countries seek nuclear weapons today than in any previous period of the nuclear age. Several countries that made or inherited nuclear weapons (e.g., South Africa) reversed course and renounced their nuclear weapons. Perhaps most importantly, no country has used nuclear weapons since 1945.” How can we move toward ending the nuclear weapons danger today?

### Closing Prayer:

O God of Abraham, we call out to you with beautiful names: the Sustainer, the Nurturer, the Compassionate One. People of many faiths seek refuge in you from the violence and war-making that grips our world. We know that you are the source of all peace. Teach us to welcome the stranger with extravagant hospitality, to forgive our enemies, to reason together in the midst of conflict and discord, that we might be agents of your peace. Amen.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “Offering an Alternative Vision to the Nuclear Weapons Build-Up,” *Faithful Security*, .



# What is the nuclear weapons danger?

Nuclear weapons could release an unprecedented amount of destruction. The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that even a limited nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan, for example, would likely kill upwards of 12 million people.

Since 1945, eight countries have developed and continue to maintain nuclear weapons: the US, Britain, Russia, France, China, Israel, India, and Pakistan. North Korea also claims to have developed nuclear weapons.

Threats from nuclear weapons:

1. The U.S. and Russia each have about 2,500 nuclear warheads on hair-trigger alert. Maintaining weapons on high alert allows a small mistake to produce incredible damage.
2. Nuclear proliferation, the spread of nuclear weapons, is one of the greatest security threats. The world community has effectively curbed the spread of nuclear weapons. Yet, as long as the U.S. and other nuclear nations see these weapons as central to their security, other nations will want them as instruments of power and security.
3. There are unsecured nuclear materials throughout the world. Even if a small amount of the unsecured nuclear material were stolen by an extremist group and then used in a city, the consequences would be devastating.

Some of this material was taken from *Still in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, published by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, revised 2006.

**You are invited to endorse the Muslim-Christian  
Statement on the Nuclear Weapons Danger.**

**Read about it inside.**