



THE BUXTON INITIATIVE: BUILDING BRIDGES AND LIVING WITH DIFFERENCES

THE BUXTON BRIDGES

SUMMER 2008

THE AMBASSADOR'S WELCOME

Dear Friends,

It's been a busy year so far at the Buxton Initiative. We have two new readings: a chapter from Os Guinness's new book "A Case for Civility" and Buxton co-founder Akbar Ahmed's newest play, "The Trial of Dara Shikoh." We've participated in events with staffers on Capitol Hill, students at Georgetown University, leaders in the business community, and an impressive list of ambassadors, scholars, and thinkers. We're having a great time, and hopefully, making a difference.

As the Buxton Initiative continues to grow, I increasingly appreciate the honest dialogues and the nature and depth of friendships that accompany each of our events and projects. It is striking that we can convene individuals from different faith communities, yet do so in a civil and respectful way. Part of our hope in putting this newsletter together is to share some of the fascinating stories and good friends with you, so you might have a sense of what inspires us each day. We also hope that you might see an opportunity to join us on this incredible journey as we strive to figure out positive ways to establish deep understanding despite differences.

Warmly,
Ambassador Holladay



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THANK YOU TO OUR BUXTON INTERNS, SCOTT AND AQILA!



Aqila Zafar is a 2007 graduate of the University of Denver, majoring in international studies with concentrations in national security and conflict resolution. Her interest in world affairs motivated her to complete an interdisciplinary program at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy with an emphasis in the global political economy of the EU and the Italian language. Aqila served as the Buxton Liaison to the Muslim Community.

Scott Buckhout is a 2008 Falls Church Fellow. He is a 2007 graduate of Davidson College, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in political science. Scott studied the roles of religion and democracy in the United States and Middle East during an undergraduate summer program in Washington D.C. He also interned for Congressman Wayne T. Gilchrest. He served as the Buxton Liaison to the Christian community.





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FAITH JOURNEY WITH DOUG JOHNSTON

Few people have a list of accomplishments as impressive as that of Dr. Douglas Johnston. A distinguished graduate from the US Naval Academy with a Masters and Ph.D. from Harvard, he has served in senior positions in government, business, academia, and the military. In fact, ‘service’ might be a good place to begin talking about Doug’s journey to and practice of his faith.

Doug grew up in a military officer’s family. Moving frequently, he found his roots in scouting where he became an “Eagle Scout” at the age of 13. The values of commitment, duty, and service led him to the Naval Academy where he was selected upon graduation as one of the first direct inputs into Admiral Rickover’s nuclear submarine program. At 27, he became the youngest officer in the Navy to qualify for command of a nuclear submarine.

Johnston believes that the values, which led him to these acts of service, were instilled partially because of his Christian heritage. But what brought him to a faith

that was more alive wasn’t his accomplishments, service, or heritage. It was adversity. In the wake of a personal tragedy, Johnston drew closer to the Lord, and it was then that he seriously began his personal walk.

As his faith grew, he paid greater attention to Jesus and His call to “make peace.” That call resonated deeply with Johnston, and he set out to marry the military call to “keep the peace” with the Christian call to “make peace.” Because of his involvement with the National Prayer Breakfast, he had become aware of the good work that spiritually motivated laypersons operating on the basis of their personal religious faith were doing in reconciling differences between people and factions—sometimes bringing wars to a halt, without anyone the wiser for how it happened. He thought that if this activity could be presented to policymakers and diplomats in a compelling way, it might then become possible for government to reinforce it and build upon it (but never to own it lest it be compromised by political agenda). In other words, the idea was to create a synergy for peacemaking that didn’t already exist. The book that resulted, “*Religion, the Missing Di-*

mension of Statecraft,” was an instant success. Impressed with the global response, Johnston then decided to walk the talk and in 1999 established the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy. (www.icrd.org)

His organization addresses identity-based conflicts that exceed the grasp of traditional diplomacy by incorporating religion as part of the solution. Typically these conflicts involve ethnic disputes, tribal warfare, or religious hostilities in conflict-ridden areas such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran, Syria, and Kashmir.

He believes that everything he does now is for the Lord including his commitment to keep the Lord “front and center” in his marriage. He and his wife pray together regularly, noting that people of faith are just as likely to divorce in America as non-believers, but couples who regularly pray together are much more likely to stay the course.

For more information about Johnston’s work, you can find his newest book “*Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*” on Amazon.com.

