

ICRD Monthly Update

December 18, 2014

Giving Pope Francis a Hand

In early November, ICRD Board Member Deborah Fikes traveled to Vatican City where she met with Pope Francis and the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity. While there, she passed them a copy of *Religion, Terror, and Error* for the Pope to read.



Tragedy in Pakistan

The recent attack against school children in Peshawar, Pakistan serves as a poignant reminder that we still have a long way to go to solve the problem of religiously-motivated violence. As you know, ICRD has a long history of working with religious leaders and educators in Pakistan to promote religious tolerance and human rights in their religious schools (madrasas) and to reduce the susceptibility of their students to radical messaging and recruitment into extremist organizations. It is with a very heavy heart that we have watched the unfolding news.



On a positive note, our work has given us strong allies in Pakistan and elsewhere, who have the religious and cultural authority to refute such occurrences. To date, at least 175 religious leader graduates of our training workshops have held rallies against the Taliban or issued statements condemning its behavior. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their countrywomen and men.

Many of you have been important supporters of our efforts to use commonly-held religious values in bridging differences between adversaries and countering violent extremism. As is

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clear from the tragedy in Peshawar, the problem is unrelenting and should continue to command all of the time and energy we can give it. The need for funding this kind of engagement continues; **so as you contemplate your year-end giving, please channel what you can into supporting this work as well.**



Thanks very much, and best wishes in this sacred season,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Johnston".

Douglas Johnston
President, ICRD

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