S
ome months ago, I attended a day-long conference at the State Department sponsored by its Office of Religion and Global Affairs. As I looked around the packed auditorium, it occurred to me that ten years earlier it would have been difficult to attract even a handful of people for such a gathering.

Indeed, since the publication of *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* first made the case in 1994, it had taken no fewer than 20 years for the foreign policy establishment to recognize and accommodate the positive role that religion can play in international affairs.

No doubt contributing to the above delay was the engrained assumption that if it played any role at all, religion was almost always seen as part of the problem. This longstanding bias was seriously challenged by the book mentioned above and its successor volumes (*Faith Based Diplomacy: Trum ping Realpolitik and Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement*), which clearly demonstrated that under the right circumstances, religious leaders and institutions can resolve intractable differences that would otherwise exceed the reach of traditional diplomacy. ICRD’s 18-year track record of successfully bridging such differences in some of the world’s more difficult neighborhoods also proves the point.

Indeed, capitalizing on the transcendent aspects of religious faith to overcome the secular obstacles to peace has become a Center trademark. And the efficacy of this approach is becoming widely recognized by the foreign policy establishment as it increasingly calls upon ICRD to achieve the impossible in highly-charged environments like Pakistan and Yemen.

Over the close to 20 years of its existence, ICRD has addressed a total of 12 trouble-spots around the world. In every instance, it has pursued what it determined to be the most strategic course of action for addressing the problem at hand. For example, in our first project in the north of Sudan, we established an Inter-Religious Council that provided a forum for top-level Muslim and Christian religious leaders to work together in addressing the religious dimensions of their longstanding civil war. In a later, more dramatic undertaking in Afghanistan in 2007, we leaned heavily on Islamic religious scripture in persuading the Taliban to release the 21 Korean missionaries they were holding captive.

Perhaps our most dangerous involvement to date took place over an eight-year period (2004–2012) in the more radical areas of Pakistan where we worked with more than 2900 madrasa leaders in reforming the curriculums and pedagogy of their religious schools to promote human rights, religious tolerance, and critical thinking. Education has also proven to be the key ingredient in our most strategic engagement to date in Saudi Arabia, where we have been working with that government to purge from its educational materials the inflammatory content that has inspired the activities of extremist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda.

In short, ICRD has enjoyed a rich and illustrious history of making a difference through its practice of faith-based diplomacy in highly challenging environments. With the recent diversification of field programs and the passing of the torch to James Patton, we have not only guaranteed the continuation of past success but have set the stage for an even broader impact. James’ academic credentials and practical experience are exceedingly well-suited to the Center’s needs, as is his personal courage and commitment to helping others. One can only hope that his leadership and that of our Board will be blessed as they continue to advance religious reconciliation as a force for good in a troubled world.

By Doug Johnston
In 2014, ICRD brought together conservative Muslim and Christian faith leaders from Pakistan and the U.S. to discuss the protection of religious minorities. On the final day, high in the Nepalese Himalayas, these two groups, which many would assume had incompatible world views, prayed together.

By James Patton

Not only had they found common ground in their practical concerns, but they found one another in worship. This is the potential power of faith in helping people overcome differences.

It is undeniable that religion has been used to justify horrible crimes, but the overwhelming majority of religious people around the world reject violence. Reactive fear, festering pain and insidious hatred are not the face or form of the divine; the best of faith calls us to rise above the most destructive of who we are and aspire to build communities where our loved ones can be nurtured.

I first encountered ICRD in 2011, on assignment from USAID’s office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. I had scheduled a half-hour meeting with the founder, Dr. Douglas Johnston, that turned into many hours. That meeting changed the direction of my work – I would join ICRD as the Executive Vice President and, in 2017, have the honor of succeeding Doug as the President and CEO. Doug’s vision of spiritual reconciliation between adversaries is, in my estimation, the most important work to be done in a world struggling with diffuse hatreds and rising violence, as evidenced in the terror attacks and ethnic and religious conflicts of recent years.

The nature of war has changed. A century ago, 90% of the casualties of war were military personnel, now the same percentage are civilians. The dramatic increase in conflicts since 2010 has forced more than 65 million people to flee their homes. In today’s wars, the combatant casualties of violence must be counted together with the children who are stunted for lack of basic nutrients, those affected by outbreaks of illnesses like cholera, the waves of refugees and internally displaced persons, and even the combat-trained extremists that may return home to form the next generation of terrorist leaders and ideologues.

Because of this disproportionate impact on civilians, it is fitting that, in many cases, civil society is taking the lead in generating solutions. And among the greatest sources of resilience in the face of this kind of conflict are communities of faith. By engaging with faith actors, ICRD is creating new opportunities to prevent potential recruits from joining the battlefield, to study and address the motives behind conflict, and to empower and reconcile those seeking alternatives to cycles of violence.

The need for ICRD’s work has never been greater. With the support of our donors, the guidance of our Board, and the efforts of our dedicated staff and partners, ICRD will work to end conflicts, arrest the spread of radicalization and violent extremism, and promote stronger, more inclusive, and more tolerant societies across the globe. And that begins with recognizing the spark of the divine in the midst of chaos – including that spark in one another – and allowing it to illuminate our common pursuit of peace.
“We are victims of violence, and that makes it difficult. But if we religious women cannot find a way to reconcile with our enemies to make peace, who will offer that example? The pain will never cease!”

— Program Participant, Women & Faith Leaders in Reconciliation. Colombia, May 2016

“Our meeting with the Saudi Minister of Education provided the perfect opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations that have emerged from our five-year project to help purge extremist-leaning content from their textbooks. The progress to date has been highly encouraging.”

— Douglas Johnston, ICRD Founder and Project Director Promoting Religious Tolerance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. United States, August 2016

“This project is enhancing cooperation among us women peacemakers, and empowering our youth to counter violent extremism in our communities.”

— Participant, Pakistani and U.S. Women Civil Society Leadership against Violent Extremism. Pakistan, January 2017

“We, as trainers, were afraid of the community’s negative reaction during the discussion on religious tolerance and freedom, but we were surprised when members of the community, including religious leaders, were very positive. We have learned to try discussing topics, even if it is not normally allowed to talk about them.”

— Program Participant, Enhancing Citizen Participation in Conflict Resolution, (with Partners Yemen). Yemen, September 2016
Our Ideas

Mission
To bridge religious considerations with the practice of international politics in support of peacemaking.

Vision
A world in which spiritual reconciliation advances peace and coexistence between adversaries.

Religious convictions are a principal source of values for nearly 85% of the global community. As such, they can be a significant factor in promoting divisiveness and enmity—or in building the trust needed to overcome the conditions driving violent conflict. Because the influence of religious, ethnic, and tribal identities is frequently stronger than that of governments, the challenge of resolving conflict and addressing violent religious extremism often exceeds the reach of traditional diplomatic or military intervention. ICRD addresses this reality by employing a unique range of capabilities that effectively engage the belief systems and core values found at the heart of identity-based conflicts. It also maximizes programmatic impact by integrating its work with other peacemaking efforts, particularly those of governments.
**ASSISTING RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS IN BECOMING POSITIVE AGENTS OF CHANGE**

While not a religious organization itself, ICRD is an organization that deals with religion. As such, it engages with religious actors, institutions, and beliefs in facilitating collaborative problem-solving to address violent conflict. These processes are integrated with political interests in a manner that seeks to draw upon their shared values.

By building relationships of trust, ICRD steers religious convictions away from fomenting conflict and toward strengthening communities in their ability to resolve current and future challenges to peace. ICRD capitalizes on the following unique attributes of religious actors and institutions, which allow them to build trust and overcome differences:

- **Critical insights into community experiences and perspectives**, thereby equipping them to negotiate relationships between individuals and institutions at all levels.
- **A perceived neutrality with respect to political, social, and economic agendas**, thus enabling them to serve as trusted mediators.
- **The authority to interpret doctrinal values through which believers can be inspired to strengthen community by transcending ego, greed, envy, hatred and other motives that feed conflict.**
- **An ability to strengthen the peacemaking capacity of policy-makers and analysts by demonstrating the value of applying religious principles to conflict mitigation.**

ICRD holds official consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is a registered Private Volunteer Organization (PVO) with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

---

**Objectives**

ICRD achieves its mission by meeting four core objectives:

- Decreasing religion’s role as a driver of conflict.
- Increasing the capacity and number of religious peacemakers.
- Increasing the role of religious clergy and laity in peacemaking.
- Increasing policy-makers’ awareness of and receptivity to the potential contributions of religious peacemakers.

**Strategies**

In turn, ICRD applies the following strategies to achieve these objectives:

- Promoting spiritual values that delegitimize violence and intolerance.
- Advancing the field of peacemaking practice by integrating the contributions of religious actors.
- Facilitating resilient community networks for preventing and resolving conflicts.
- Expanding the capacity of civil society to support faith-based peacemaking.

**Core Capabilities**

By combining innovative and traditional approaches, ICRD has developed a set of unique capabilities and methodologies for conducting faith-based diplomacy to promote reconciliation and resolve differences. Included among these capabilities are:

- Identifying and applying faith doctrines that inspire empathy and reconciliation.
- Engaging excluded and ideologically divided communities in constructive conversations.
- Facilitating relationships of trust and identifying new areas for collaboration.
- Conducting conflict analysis, particularly where religious considerations are salient.
- Reinforcing contemporary conflict resolution techniques with faith-based practices.
ICRD uses the following criteria to determine where its interventions will add the most value:

- U.S. foreign policy has a strategic interest in the area in conflict.
- ICRD can access the trusted relationships needed to address the conditions that sustain conflict.
- Religious actors are either contributing to the conflict or are insufficiently engaged in promoting its peaceful resolution.
- The conflict area is underserved by governments or other NGOs.

ICRD develops the following program methodologies, orchestrates their application in the field, and analyzes their effectiveness:

**Methodologies**

- Strengthening the roles of both male and female religious adherents, across generations and traditions, in conflict resolution and countering violent extremism.
- Enhancing themes of tolerance in religious education curriculums and pedagogy.
- Identifying and leveraging shared spiritual values to support collaborative problem-solving and faith-based reconciliation.
- Facilitating the cooperative development of counter-narratives to violent extremism.
- Formulating faith-based conflict resolution frameworks in concert with local partners.
- Training other prospective local trainers in applying faith-based methodologies.

**Analysis**

- Determining context-specific roles for religious stakeholders in the resolution of conflict and violent extremism.
- Codifying best-practices for engaging religious stakeholders in mitigating violent conflict.
- Mapping identity-based conflicts and how they are contributing to particular cases of instability.
VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Pakistani Women Countering Extremism
Recognizing the crucial role women play in both reducing and fueling violent extremism around the world, ICRD has developed a network of Pakistani women civil society leaders and religious educators from girls’ madrasahs (religious schools) who are working to implement countering violent extremism (CVE) initiatives in their community. Through this project, ICRD has trained four teams of women on CVE tools and practices to enable them to design and implement local initiatives in four cities across the country, which have reached over 200 individuals to date. This effort has not only empowered these women to increase their role in the community, it has fostered collaborative relationships between religious and nonreligious leaders and connected Pakistani participants with mentors and partners in the U.S., establishing the groundwork for an international network.

Local Peacebuilding in Yemen
In 2014, the government of Yemen collapsed under the strain of intense internal conflict, which provoked a regional military response, a massive humanitarian crisis, and widespread community instability. In the midst of this challenging environment, ICRD has been working with the U.S. Institute of Peace and local Yemeni partners to strengthen the capacity of religious and civil society actors to resolve local conflicts and counter violent extremism. By enhancing the capacity of conflict resolution practitioners, this project aims to reduce the operating space and influence of extremist groups such as Al Qaeda, who purport to establish law and order. Building on the lessons learned from our training, participants have gone on to develop and implement a number of initiatives that address the drivers of violence and extremism at the community level. ICRD’s 2017 publication, Empowering Yemeni Peacebuilders: The Intersection of Conflict Resolution and CVE, offers a systematic overview of that work with personal reflections from those impacted by the work on the ground. In the next few years, ICRD will expand this program to engage additional religious leaders and civil society partners.

Integrating Conservative Religious Actors into CVE
In light of the growing threat of violent religious extremism in the Middle East and North Africa region, ICRD has been exploring innovative strategies to counter the appeal of Jihadi-Salafi groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda. Through field research in Pakistan, Yemen, Tunisia, and Morocco, ICRD has been critically examining the role played by conservative religious actors — who often possess unique influence with and access to those at-risk of radicalization — in countering violent extremism. This research draws on the perspectives of Salafi and other conservative religious actors (imams, religious students, educators) from across some of the areas that have been at greatest risk for recruitment into extremist groups, such as the south of Yemen and poverty-ridden urban areas in Tunisia and Morocco. Beginning in August 2017, ICRD published a series of reports that collectively outline recommendations to national and international policymakers and practitioners on how to more effectively integrate a range of religious actors and institutions into future CVE initiatives.
Religious and Civil Society Collaboration in CVE
To support the international effort to dissuade and deter youth from joining groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda, ICRD has collaborated with U.S. and transnational organizations to create a replicable and transferable model for training religious and civil society actors to lead community-based CVE programs together. In the summer of 2017, this model was piloted in North Africa, with a small group of 16 civil society actors — religious scholars, youth activists, and women religious actors — from communities with demonstrated risk of recruitment to extremist groups. Participants were trained on international best practices in analyzing the drivers of extremism in their community, developing targeted programming, and utilizing a range of relevant community engagement skills. Based on this training, participants have developed their own local projects, which will serve as an example for replicating this model in many other contexts.

Social Reconciliation

Reintegration of Combatants in Colombia
Colombia has suffered a century of extreme violence, which has left profound scars of mistrust, retribution, and social marginalization. In this climate, ICRD has been working to integrate a framework for social reconciliation into the efforts of the Government of Colombia’s Agencia para la Reincorporación y Normalización (ARN) to improve the sustainable reintegration of former combatants into the society and reduce the driving factors for recruitment into criminal activity. To date, ICRD has trained over 50 female religious peacemakers in conflict analysis and reconciliation practices who, in turn, have trained 300 more in eight conflict-impacted regions. ICRD has also hosted dozens of local community workshops with faith leaders and government leaders in three pilot regions on pluralist peacemaking and reconciliation, and launched locally-designed and led pilot engagements on reconciliation with communities and reintegrating combatants. ICRD’s next step in this project is to conduct reconciliation between demobilized fighters and victims of violence, and pairing them to conduct reconciliation activities in communities slated to receive large numbers of former combatants. Finally, the generation of new employment opportunities will greatly increase social acceptance and facilitate the disengagement of former fighters from criminality and conflict.

Faith-Based Reconciliation in Syria
In hopeful but sober anticipation of an end to the brutal civil war in Syria, ICRD conducted faith-based reconciliation seminars for prominent civil society leaders from Bedouin, Kurdish, Alawite, Syriac Christian, Shi’a, and other Sunni communities aligned with the Syrian opposition. This effort led to the creation of a social contract in which each community committed to promoting inter-group reconciliation, collaborative problem-solving, and civil society empowerment. The conflict in Syria disrupted the work, but ICRD hopes to continue with this effort as future circumstances permit.

“Religion matters in foreign policy for the simple reason that what people believe about God and God’s will is a major influence on how they act towards one another, how they conceive of their responsibilities, and where they draw the line between right and wrong...”

— The Honorable Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State

2017 ICRD Faith-in-Action Awardee
Yemen’s Marginalized South
Following the overthrow of a long-standing dictatorship in 2011, the Yemeni government began a delicate political transition. The process failed to overcome challenges with certain political interest groups, leading to a spiral of violence that has left the country in chaos. In an effort to understand how this transition could have been conducted more effectively and inclusively, ICRD began a study of Yemen’s southern governorates, which have been the site of multiple political and religious insurgencies. In 2014, in partnership with local researchers, ICRD conducted surveys with over 400 southerners to assess their attitudes toward Yemen’s 2013 National Dialogue Conference, in addition to various aspects of the political transition and prospects for future stability. The findings of this study – along with recommendations for ensuring a more inclusive transition process in the future – were published in a 2016 report, titled, *A Fractured South: Addressing Separatism and Other Challenges Amidst Yemen’s Political Tumult*. Drawing on these recommendations, ICRD has developed a program to strengthen the political inclusion of Yemeni communities in anticipation of future dialogues, and to facilitate reconciliation between divided factions.

Inter-Religious Conflict Resolution

Local Counter-Narratives to Sectarian Violence in Pakistan
Beginning in 2015, ICRD has been working with a network of Pakistani religious actors from across all major Islamic sects to develop a locally-informed response to the pervasive sectarian prejudice that has divided Pakistani society and fueled numerous extremist movements. Working in concert with indigenous partners, ICRD brought together prominent religious stakeholders from the Deobandi, Salafi, Barelvi, and Shi’a communities, who collaboratively designed a “Narrative of Sectarian Reconciliation” that identifies and refutes the most prevalent and divisive beliefs about other sects. To build support for that shared narrative at the community level, and foster inter-sect tolerance, ICRD has trained and mobilized local religious leaders from each sect. These advocates have written numerous articles and conducted dozens of local programs to disseminate this unified message of inter-sect harmony in major cities in Punjab, Sindh, and KPK. Their efforts are supported by inter-sect groups of respected religious leaders who can mobilize rapidly, as needed, to address flashpoints of sectarian conflict.

Religious Prejudice in the U.S. and Pakistan
In 2014, ICRD convened a meeting of conservative Muslims and Christians from Pakistan and the U.S. – groups that are widely thought to have fundamentally irreconcilable worldviews – to form the Interfaith Leadership Network (ILN). The purpose of this network was to provide a space for both groups to explore the factors that contribute to religious prejudice and fuel violent extremism in their respective countries. As a result of this exchange, the ILN members have formed an enduring coalition that has launched various projects to address xenophobia and protect religious minorities.
Islamophobia in the U.S.
To address the rising trend of religious intolerance at home and build on the momentum of the ILN program, ICRD held a “Conference to Combat Islamophobia” in 2015. From this event, 40 prominent U.S. Evangelical pastors emerged with a greater understanding of the prejudices faced by American Muslims and an enhanced commitment to act to promote tolerance and respect for all religious minorities. These include strategies for countering anti-Muslim sentiment, which are now being implemented in a number of communities. The participant presentations on various aspects of Islamophobia were published in special editions of the Dialogue Institute’s Journal of Ecumenical Studies and Fuller Seminary’s Interfaith Evangelical Dialogue. ICRD is currently exploring opportunities to launch the next stage of this program that will integrate effective methods for countering religious hostility into the training of clergy at seminaries and universities in the U.S.

TOLERANCE IN EDUCATION

Religious Education in Pakistan
Since 2004, ICRD has engaged teachers and faculty from over 5000 Pakistani madrasahs (religious schools) in teacher training programs that promote the enhancement of pedagogy and curricula, with an emphasis on religious tolerance, human rights, and critical thinking. To meet the growing demand for this program, ICRD successfully transferred ownership of the program to a local organization, which we continue to support. In local hands, the program has continued to grow and recently achieved two significant milestones: (1) the development and implementation of teacher training certificate programs for madrasa teachers at several prestigious universities in Pakistan and (2) the development by local faith leaders from all sects of new resources for teaching peacebuilding and conflict resolution, based on Islamic principles, which have been used in newly established teacher training centers.

Religious Tolerance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, ICRD began a program in 2011 to monitor and support the efforts made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to remove the inflammatory content from their national curriculum, as well as to begin tracking the global spread of Saudi textbooks. Our initial review of the entire 2012 curriculum was the most comprehensive evaluation conducted to date and established a baseline to measure future improvement. Our findings confirmed that the Kingdom has made laudable progress toward reform, but that much remains to be done to fully complete the task. A second, thorough review of the high school curriculum is currently underway to assess the reforms made to the textbook content so far and make recommendations for further improvement. As part of the current review, ICRD will also begin to assess the impact that these materials have had when exported to other countries, from North Africa to Southeast Asia to Europe. In 2017, President Emeritus Dr. Douglas Johnston testified before the House Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation and Trade on the status of Saudi educational reform efforts.
The day-to-day operations of the Center are carried out by a small but highly talented and committed staff. With the support of our Board, our first order of accountability is to the many local partners at home and abroad whom we serve – pioneering the development and implementation of state-of-the-field programs that support positive transformation within their communities. In so doing, we strive to be excellent stewards of every cent of support that we receive from government and private funders and, especially, our individual donors.

We invite you to get to know us – as an organization, and as the dedicated individuals who comprise our team.
Our donors are the life-blood of our work. While we enjoy strong programmatic support from government and private foundations, your individual contributions are critical for sustaining institutional growth in order to meet the real and urgent need for spiritual reconciliation around the world.

ICRD is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. All donations to the Center are tax-deductible. Please consider making a contribution online through our website at www.icrd.org; by cash or by check sent to our mailing address: 1003 K St NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20001; or by phone at 202-331-9404.

ICRD is a pioneering organization working in a pioneering field. We aim to advance the practice of faith-based peacebuilding, and we are proud to be regarded as thought-leaders in the field. To learn more about the rich history of this approach, please explore our publications, including Dr. Douglas Johnston’s landmark books (available at www.icrd.org, or through Amazon.com):

*Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft,* Oxford University Press (1994), quickly became required reading at the U.S. Foreign Service Institute and has been incorporated as a course text in numerous colleges, universities, and seminaries around the world.

*Religion, Terror, and Error,* achieves three important goals: 1) It shows how religious considerations can be incorporated into practices of U.S. foreign policy; 2) it offers a successor to the rational-actor model of decision-making that accommodates non-state actors; and 3) it suggests a new leadership paradigm better suited for the multi-polar world of today.

*Religion and Foreign Affairs* provides academics and practitioners with a broad selection of articles by world-class scholars on religion and global politics that range across generations, cultures, and world view – from St. Augustine and Thucydides to Reinhold Niebuhr and Peter Berger.
Prior to 2011, when he joined ICRD as Executive Vice President, he had worked in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. His non-governmental experience included assessing the impact of drug policies and military responses in Bolivia, training Cambodian Buddhists on their role in post-conflict stability, and coordinating citizen security and conflict transformation efforts in the Andean region. His governmental experience included working with the Special Envoy for Sudan, leading stability operations assessments for the U.S. Department of State in South Sudan, and enhancing the Latin America and Religion and Conflict portfolios for USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation.

In his role as ICRD’s President, James serves as a member of a number of collaborative efforts to advance the field of peacemaking, including: the U.S. Department of State’s Working Group on Religion and Foreign Policy; the Council on Foreign Relations’ Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group; and; the public-private partnership advancing national dialogue on reconciliation in Colombia, Reconciliación Colombia. He is a Senior Visiting Fellow at Brigham Young University’s Wheatley Institution and the co-author, with Rev. David Steele, of the forthcoming (2018) U.S. Institute of Peace publication, Religion and Conflict Guides: Religion and Reconciliation.

James holds a Master of Law and Diplomacy degree from The Fletcher School at Tufts University and a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School. He has taught and lectured widely, and is fluent in Spanish, with practical experience in a number of other languages.

Dr. Douglas M. Johnston is President Emeritus and founder of the International Center for Religion & Diplomacy. Prior to founding ICRD, Dr. Johnston served as Executive Vice President and COO of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, where he also chaired the Preventive Diplomacy Program and the Maritime Studies program.

A distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Dr. Johnston holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University and has served in senior positions in both the public and private sectors. His government assignments include: Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy; Director of Policy Planning and Management in the Office of the Secretary of Defense; and planning officer with the President’s Office of Emergency Preparedness. He was the founding director of Harvard University’s Executive Program in National and International Security. Dr. Johnston is a Captain in the Naval Reserve and, at the age of 27, was the youngest officer in the navy to qualify for command of a nuclear submarine.

Dr. Johnston’s publications include: Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft (1994); Foreign Policy into the 21st Century: the U.S. Leadership Challenge(1994); Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik(2003); Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement; and Religion and Foreign Affairs: Essential Readings(2012). Religion, Terror, and Error won the 2011 “Book of the Year Award” by Foreword Reviews, the rating agency for universities and independent publishers.

Dr. Johnston’s hands-on experience in the political-military arena, coupled with his work in preventive diplomacy, has guided ICRD’s efforts to bridge religion and politics in support of peacemaking in Sudan, Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Colombia and Saudi Arabia. He holds an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters and in 2008 was identified in a leading Christian journal as “The Father of Faith-based Diplomacy.”
of strategic partnerships, diversifying funding support, individual donor engagement, and oversight of all external communications tools. Prior to joining ICRD, Michael served as program manager for International Services at the American Red Cross and as a social services caseworker for the City of Saint Louis. He holds a B.A. in Psychology from Saint Louis University, an M.A. in International Relations from Webster University, and an M.A. in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University.

Aeryka Fausett
Executive Assistant to the President
Aeryka is an international affairs professional with a Middle East concentration who worked in Jordan and has supported ICRD’s program research for Pakistani sectarian violence, conflict resolution in Colombia, and religious identities in Yemen. Previously at Denver’s African Community Center, she facilitated career placement for resettled refugees from Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan. She is an alumnus of the University of Colorado.

C. Eduardo Vargas
Senior Associate
Before joining ICRD in January, 2017, Eduardo served as the Deputy Director at the Center for Faith Based & Community Initiatives at the U.S. Agency for International Development engaging faith-based organizations and civil society to further USAID’s mission. There he led public diplomacy and partnership engagements to support USAID’s humanitarian and development priorities, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge. Eduardo has led interreligious forums and delegations in Oman, Pakistan, and Syria to bridge divides between Islam and the West. Recognized by Huffington Post’s 40 Under 40 in Foreign Policy, Eduardo is an M.A. alumnus of Seton Hall University.

ICRD Board and Advisors

ICRD Board of Directors:

Mr. Harold Jacobi
Chairman
Mr. James Stanley
Vice Chairman
Dr. Douglas Johnston
President Emeritus
Dr. David Allen
Mr. Joseph Donovan
Ms. Deborah Fikes
Dr. Conrad Fischer
Hon. H.P. Goldfield
Mr. John Kiser
Mr. David Lightfoot

Mr. Thomas McDevitt
Hon. Bob McEwen
Hon. Edwin Meese III
Mr. James Patton
Mr. Daniel Pincus
Mr. Richard Poirier, Jr.
Hon. Joe Reeder
Mr. Frank Roby
Dr. Abdul Aziz Said
Hon. James Slattery
Mr. William Thomas
Mr. Steven Thompson
Mr. David Vander Mey

Advisors to the Board:

Hon. Richard Schubert
(Strategic Counselor)
Mr. Reuben Sequeira
(Legal Advisor)

Henry “Duke” Burbridge
Senior Researcher
For the past decade, Duke has served as a researcher and program developer for ICRD, providing support to several of ICRD’s major programs, including the Pakistan Madrasa Project, Education and Curricular Reform in Saudi Arabia, and most recently, Countering Jihadi Salafism in Pakistan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Yemen. His publications with ICRD include Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan: Strategies for Engaging Conservative Muslims (2016), Global Distribution of Saudi Arabian Textbooks (2013), and The Sectarian Dimensions of Madrasa Reform in Pakistan (2010).

Andrew McDonnell
Program Officer
Andrew McDonnell is a researcher and analyst specializing in religion, conflict dynamics, and countering violent extremism. At ICRD, Andrew has overseen research efforts in Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, and Pakistan aimed at assessing good practices in countering violent extremism, and supported the implementation of various training programs for religious actors. He is co-author of ICRD publications, Addressing Jihadi-Salafism in Yemen: The Role of Religion and Community in the Midst of Civil War; Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan: Strategies for Engaging Conservative Muslims; and A Fractured South: Addressing Separatism and Other Challenges Amidst Yemen’s Political Tumult. He holds an M.A. in Religious Studies from Georgetown University.

Mohammed al-Samawi
Fellow
Mohammed serves as a fellow for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region at ICRD, where he has provided a wide range of support for the Center’s community engagement and research programs in Yemen, including conducting program evaluation, communicating with local partners and undertaking translations. Hailing from Sana’a, he has experienced the impacts of the civil war and conflict in Yemen first-hand, both in a professional capacity and as a civilian. He has authored more than 30 studies and reports about Yemen and reported extensively on Sudan, including Darfur. He is currently writing his memoir for HarperCollins Publishers.
At ICRD, we are privileged to bear witness to the profound selflessness and determined spirit of those who, despite great personal risk, rise above hatred, fear, and bigotry to put their highest faith ideals into action.