

## Uniting the Children of Abraham

By Jamie Glazov

FrontPageMagazine.com | 11/4/2005

Frontpage Interview's guest today is Joe Montville, a Distinguished Diplomat in Residence at the School of International Service at American University and at George Mason's Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution. He is on the advisory boards of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, The Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, and the Washington Theological Consortium. He spent 23 years as a diplomat with posts in the Middle East and North Africa.

**FP:** Joe Montville, welcome to Frontpage Interview.

**Montville:** Thank you Jamie.

**FP:** One of your key fields is interfaith dialogue. What exactly is this dialogue and why and how did you become interested in it?

**Montville:** Dialogue in general is a form of engagement between people with differences or outright conflicts that aims to clarify positions and competing needs and in the best circumstances close psychological gaps and gradually re-humanize relationships.

Interfaith dialogue works to overcome perceived religious differences between people that lead to conflict and violence. I had always been professionally preoccupied with the Arab-Israeli conflict and presumably the Muslim-Jewish conflict. But it was only when I joined the Center for Strategic and International Studies project called "Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft," in 1990 that I came to see how effective spiritually inspired mediators could be in transforming ethnic and sectarian conflicts into manageable relationships and even peace agreements. Oxford published the book with that title, edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, in 1994.

**FP:** Tell us about some of the activities between religious Jews and Muslims and whether they have any genuine promise.

**Montville:** A few years ago in Jerusalem, I met with a professor of conflict resolution from Bar Illan University, Israel's premier religious school of higher education. He said he had organized a dialogue group of religious Jews and religious Muslim Palestinians that he found to be more serious and accepting than secular groups that he had experienced. He said the Muslims consistently showed more respect for religious Jews. They were usually more suspicious of secular Jews. The professor concluded that the Muslims felt they had more in common in terms of religious values with believing Jews.

There are several examples of religious Jewish-Muslim engagement in my colleague Marc Gopin's book, "Holy War, Holy Peace; How Religion Can Bring to the Middle East, (Oxford, 2002). Gopin, a rabbi and professor at George Mason University who founded the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution there, spent long periods in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza meeting together and separately with Palestinian imams and Israeli rabbis who were committed to integrate shared beliefs in acknowledgement and repentance of past wrongs committed against the other and to develop rituals of forgiveness and peacemaking. One can even find a draft Jewish-Muslim agreement on the peace of Jerusalem in the book, although it was never formally proclaimed.

Carrying on in this direction, Adam Seligman, a professor of religion at Boston University, runs the Toleration Project designed to elicit standards of tolerance and respect for pluralism from within religious traditions. Among many of his ongoing activities is a joint study project between students in an Israeli yeshiva and an Islamic academy in Israel, and regular meetings between Israeli rabbis and Palestinian imams.

Closer to home, On September 21, Marc Gopin and religious studies professor Robert Eisen of George Washington University organized a meeting between King Abdullah II of Jordan and sixty American rabbis brought to Washington as guests of the King. His speech, "Judaism and Islam: Beyond Tolerance," focused on the shared Abrahamic roots of the two religions and noted that Jews and Muslims are tied together by culture and history as well. And for more than "a thousand years both our peoples have contributed to the complex tapestry of Eastern civilization." This was a significant initiative coming from a direct descendent of the Prophet Muhammad to representative of the American Jewish community who reciprocated with a standing ovation.

Clearly none of the religious peace-building activities can alone create the security Israel needs to protect it from Palestinian or Islamist terrorism, nor substitute for the Palestinian Authority's need to impose rule of law on its anarchic militias. But the religious work proves there is a basis for spiritually based community building between Jews and Muslims than provides hope for the future.

**FP:** I'm just wondering, what hope is there for "Interfaith Dialogue when the Muslim faith teaches them that they must fight unbelievers (i.e. Sura 9:29) and that there should be a state of war until the whole world submits to Islam? How genuine can a dialogue be between Muslims and Jews be when the Muslims are taught by their holy book that Jews are descendants of apes and pigs? (Suras 2:65 and 7:166 etc.) Is there hope that Muslims can reform their religion and interpret these passages in more of a benign light? This is especially tricky since the Quran's teachings are not meant for a certain time and place but are considered eternal.

**Montville:** I don't want to give the impression that I'm expert in Koranic exegesis, but the Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation of the Koran which is annotated prints the phrase "Be ye apes, despised and rejected," in both Suras 2:65 and 7:166 as part of God's condemnation of Jews in Arabia who broke the Sabbath. Under Mosaic Law the punishment for breaching the Sabbath was death.

The Koran has multiple references to the Hebrew Bible with and consistently respectful mentions of its prophets. Moses has the most citations in the Koran, about 140. The polemics against Jews and Christians in the Koran focused on those who broke the laws of the Torah and the guidance of the Gospels. I recommend Reza Aslan's "No god But God," (Random House, 2005), as a valuable guide to understanding the Koran and the historical context of the Hijaz "Mecca and Medina" in the Prophet's time.

Aslan states that calls to "fight those who do not believe in God and the Last Day, (9:29), were aimed at the Meccan polytheists who were trying to kill the Prophet. Politics was rough and violent in those days. Muhammad was almost killed in the Battle of Uhud near Medina and his jaw was broken and teeth smashed. The idea that Islam requires fighting non-Muslims until they convert developed at the time of the Crusades as, in part, a response to the attacks by Christian armies.

**FP:** Well, Islamists, and many Muslims, worldwide today call Jews "apes and pigs." There are myriad examples of this phenomenon, indicating that the idea that these verses apply to all Jews is unfortunately common among Muslims. So the question is, why? And how do you suggest this can be fought?

**Montville:** I agree that the use of vicious anti-Jewish epithets is widespread among Muslim extremists and other Muslims. It results from the bloody conflict between Israel, the Palestinians and other Arabs and Muslims, and it is a sign of impotent rage. We deal with this the way I am dealing with these questions. Go to the texts and put the polemics in context.

For example, "Be ye apes despised and rejected," in 2:65-66 and 7:166 relates as I said before to Jews who broke the Sabbath. Surah 7:163 says, "Ask them concerning the town standing close by the sea. Behold, they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. For on the day of their Sabbath their fish did come to them, openly holding up their heads. But on the day they had no Sabbath they [the fish] came not. Thus did we make a trial of them, for they were given to transgression."

In this story, God tests the Jewish fishermen of the town whose fish learned that they were safe on the Sabbath, but who stayed out of sight during the workweek. God's test was to see if the Jews would go after the overconfident fish on the Sabbath. It was a tough test and they failed it opening themselves to God's denunciation.

However, I cannot put the condemnation of Jewish fishermen working on the Sabbath in the same category of the Gospels having the Jews' say of Jesus, "His blood be on us and on our children"

The key point is that that Jewish and Gentile historians who have studied the seventh century CE reject allegations of Qur'anic anti-Semitism. Gordon Newby wrote in "The History of the Jews of Arabia," (South Carolina, 1989), that Judaism and Islam were within "the same sphere of religious discourse." And as Reza Aslan writes in "No god but God," both religions had the same

religious characters, stories, and anecdotes. Both discussed the same fundamental questions from similar perspectives, and both had nearly identical moral and ethical values.” The great historian of the medieval Mediterranean, Shlomo Dov Goitein, wrote simply that there was nothing repugnant to the Jewish religion in Muhammad’s preaching. (“Jews and Arabs,” New York, 1970).

You state correctly Jamie that Muslim militants today act as though Muhammad was an anti-Semite. But this is clearly untrue, and we have to fight them on this. They cannot be allowed to hijack the Prophet and the Quran. But we have to do our homework to fight successfully.

**FP:** Well, I am not too sure how Muhammad’s terror against the Jewish tribe Banu Qaynuga reflects his love of the Jews, or how his command to his followers to “Kill any Jew that falls into your power” does either (Muhammad, as quoted in Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, translated by A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p.369). We know that the first victim of this command was Jewish merchant Ibn Sunayna.

And I am not too sure how Muhammad’s love of the Jews manifested itself in **the brutal massacre of the Jewish tribe of Arabia, Banu Qurayza**. Muhammad ratified a judgment that saw as many as 900 Jewish men from the Qurayza beheaded and their decapitated corpses buried in a pit while Muhammad looked on. The Muslims then sold the women and children into slavery, while distributing some of them as gifts among Muhammad’s followers (Muhammad took one Qurayza woman, Rayhana, for his own pleasure).

In any case, we’ll have to save this debate for another forum.

Let’s talk about the unfinished business in Christendom's relationship with the Jews of Europe. Can you touch on this? And how do you think it relates to problems in the Middle East?

**Montville:** A few years before she died, my mother told me I once came home from St. George’s Roman Catholic School and said, “I’m not going to play with (my close neighborhood friend) Joey Marback any more because he’s a Jew, and the Jews killed Christ.”

I did not remember that, but it must have been around Good Friday and Easter. That’s because the Catholic liturgy for Good Friday condemned “the perfidious Jews” for murdering Jesus Christ. In my recent research on the Jewish-Christian relationship I learned that European Jews always made themselves scarce if they could on Good Friday, because Christians had the habit of streaming out of church to look for Jews to beat up, or worse. It constantly amazes me that the Church did not change its toxic liturgy until 1965 in the Vatican II Council. And this only because Pope John XXIII, perhaps the most genuinely Jesus-like pontiff in modern times, specifically charged the Council to examine the Christian-Jewish problem after a French Jewish historian, Jules Isaac, persuaded him to.

Yet even today, Christians are almost totally unaware of the historical debt owed to the Jews of Europe, far pre-dating the Holocaust, because of Church dogma condemning them collectively and in perpetuity for the Crucifixion of Christ. James Carroll’s masterful “Constantine’s Sword,”

relentlessly documents this debt. There is some rueful Jewish gratitude to St. Augustine who wrote in “The City of God,” that Christians should not kill the Jews. They should just keep them in a state of permanent subjugation and humiliation so that they never forget their crime.

Zionism, a form of secular nationalism, was the nineteenth century response of European Jews to despair that they could ever be safe, accepted and respected by Christians. Hitler accelerated the determination of Zionists to settle in Palestine and establish a secure homeland. I believe that Christendom in the form of Europe, the United States and, yes, Orthodox Russia--has a powerful moral obligation to help the Jews of Israel and the Arabs of Palestine to be safe, accepted and mutually respected. And I am encouraged by the increasing evidence that they might be able to get to this stage with some help from their shared monotheistic legacy.

**FP:** What are your own thoughts on anti-Semitism, its modern-day manifestation etc? What do you think of the hard Left and Islamism finding common ground on anti-Semitism today?

**Montville:** Anti-Semitism is a Christian invention that New Testament scholars trace to the fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, and its repeated use of the term “the Jews” in describing Jesus’ enemies at the time of the Crucifixion. Instead of references to the leaders or Temple priests in Jerusalem who felt threatened by Jesus’ condemnation of their corrupt behavior and his popularity with the common people, the authors of John simply used “the Jews” as a collective, all-purpose description of the people calling for Jesus’ death. This and similar language in the New Testament became the basis for the evolution of Christian theology as I have noted.

As the centuries progressed the blood libel “accusing Jews of killing Christian children for rituals” became grounded in European culture. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the notoriously paranoid description of a Jewish global conspiracy to rule the world, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, appeared, probably the work of the Czarist secret police. This only intensified Christian anti-Semitism, which was imported, word for word, libel for libel, into the Arab Middle East by Christian Arabs.

As the Zionist movement grew and Arab nationalism also developed Arab Christians and Muslims used anti-Semitism as many still do today as an instrument of combat against the settlement of Jews in Palestine and later as a way to inflict psychological pain on Israelis. In my view, the “hard Left” probably combines a measure of classic Christian cultural anti-Semitism with an ideological condemnation of Israel as a foreign colony maintained by force on a third world people.

Classical anti-Semitism will wither away once Christians understand the origins in the New Testament of the idea of collective Jewish guilt for the Crucifixion of Christ as probably a reflection of the difficulties the Jesus movement was having in persuading Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, in texts written some seventy to one hundred years after he died.

It will also disappear when the work underway today to reconnect Jews, Muslims and Christians as an Abrahamic family advances.

**FP:** It doesn't matter that the Quran mentions the Jewish prophets, it matters what is said about them. And the Qur'an emphasizes that the Prophets *taught Islam*, not Judaism or Christianity (as it says of Abraham in Al-Imran 67). Don't these mentions simply form part of the overall condemnation of present-day Jews and Christians as renegades (At-Tawba 30)?

**Montville:** The Quran says in Al-Imran: "Abraham was not a Jew not yet a Christian; but he was true in faith, and he bowed his will to God's (which is Islam.); and he joined not gods with God." It is historically factual that neither Judaism nor Christianity existed in Abraham's time, but from the Muslim perspective in which any person who "bows down his will to God" is a Muslim literally in Arabic, "one who submits" to the One God. Abraham was thus a monotheist who "joined not gods" with God. He was not a polytheist. The Quran of course discusses the Jewish Torah and the Christian "Ingil" or Gospels extensively.

These words cannot be taken accurately to be a basis for the condemnation of present-day Jews and Christians as renegades. At-Tawba 30 criticizes the Jews who called Ezra one of the "sons of God," and rejects Christian claims that Jesus was the Son of God. In the Quran such positions are violations of the doctrine of One God, period. Modern Muslim polemicists who cite At-Tawba 30 as God's rejection of all Jews and all Christians as "deluded from the truth," are wrong and must be fought on this.

The reality is that the Quran asks Muslims to say to the Jews and the Christians: "We believe in God, and that which has been revealed to us, which is that which was revealed to Abraham and Ismail, and Jacob and the tribes [of Israel], as well as that which the Lord revealed to Moses and to Jesus and to all the other Prophets. We make no distinction between any of them; we submit ourselves to God." (3:84)

**FP:** Well, since Muslims identify their religion with pure monotheism, it is a distinction without a difference to say that the verse identifying Abraham as a Muslim only means that Abraham practiced pure monotheism. Muslims have used this verse and others to preach that their religion is the true form of Judaism and Christianity, and thus to underscore the point the contemporary Jews and Christians are renegades.

Let's move over to your comment about Jihad and the Crusades. If the idea of violent Jihad developed during the Crusades, what motivated the 450 years of jihad warfare that predated the Crusades? This warfare saw the Muslims sweeping out of Arabia and conquering what had been the Christian lands of the Middle East and North Africa, and driving on into Europe. Are you actually trying to say that Hadith passages such as Sahih Muslim 4294, in which Muhammad instructs Muslims to offer unbelievers conversion, subjugation, or war, were written *after* the Crusades?

**Montville:** There is no question that the Muslims of Arabia constantly expanded their conquests taking advantage of the rolling collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the north and the Persians in the northeast. They also moved into Egypt and across North Africa. This was an imperial enterprise. But it was not the monster juggernaut that you suggest Jamie.

Christian Arabs who resented Byzantine rule helped the Muslims win. And the Muslim reconnaissance party that ventured into Spain from Morocco found the Christian Visigoth rulers to be despised by their subjects and in disarray. Jews of Spain supported the Muslim raiders against the Visigoths, and the Muslims, with very few troops at first, recruited Jews to garrison the Spanish towns they took.

Sahih Muslim 4294, a tradition attributed to the Prophet, tells Muslim conquerors to not embezzle spoils; to keep their word; to not mutilate dead bodies; and to not kill children. When they come upon polytheists the Muslims should offer them three options "accept Islam; ask them to leave their lands; or if they refuse to convert then they must pay the jizya or head tax" which Jews and Christians under Muslim rule had to pay. If the polytheists reject all three options, the Muslims should fight them.

These were conquests history is filled with conquests. Sometimes they were unbelievably brutal as when Hulagu, the Mongol conqueror, entered Iraq in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE and built pyramids with the skulls of Arabs and Kurds. Other times the invaders were welcomed as liberators. Crimes against humanity must be documented throughout history and accounted for by the descendents of the aggressors.

**FP:** The bottom line is that Muslims have engaged in vicious religious imperialism throughout history and the non-Muslim inhabitants of these conquests have had much to suffer. And Muslims engaged in this violence before the Crusades and they didn't need the Crusades to get their ideas about Jihad.

Let me get back for a moment to anti-Semitism. I find it a bit bizarre that in a world where Jewish blood is primarily being shed at the hands of Islamic violence, you choose to spend all your time blaming Christianity for anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism in fact predates Christianity, although there is no doubt that it received a new impetus from Christianity. Nevertheless, it has been repeatedly condemned as un-Christian by Christian leaders -- most notably in modern times by the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church. When do you think we will see similar actions by Muslim leaders? Are you pushing for such actions?

Why is it, for instance, that it is only in the Arab Middle East today that the Protocols still live? This abhorrent forgery does not circulate among Christians today, but it was found not too long ago serialized in a Muslim newspaper in New Jersey, and it forms the basis of a TV serial being shown during this Ramadan in Jordan. What kind of interfaith dialogue do we have until the Muslim community squashes this Jew-Hatred?

The termination of anti-Semitism has already happened in Christianity. No Christian Church or sect today teaches that the Jews are responsible for the Crucifixion. It is common Christian teaching that all people, because of sin, are responsible for the Crucifixion. In Roman Catholic Churches on Good Friday, the assembled crowd is made to shout "Crucify Him!" at the relevant point in the reading of the Gospels, to drive home this point -- they do not, in other words, hire

some local Jews to shout this. Moreover, Christians pray for the Jews. Name me some Muslim ceremonies where special prayers are offered for Jews.

You also seem to be ignoring the impetus to anti-Semitism given by Qur'an 2:65-66, 5:59-60, 7:166, 9:30, etc. How will those Qur'anic passages that reinforce anti-Semitism wither away?

**Montville:** I agree that with the publication of *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time) during the Vatican II Council in 1965, the Roman Catholic Church changed the dogma and Good Friday liturgy to absolve “the Jews” of the crime of murdering Jesus. I also agree with James Carroll that the Church did not go far enough in acknowledging Christendom’s crimes against the Jews of Europe. I believe that in every crime against humanity a history should be taken and responsibility assessed.

My goal in the Christian-Jewish relationship is to have every Christian understand our debt and that remorse for it be part of our permanent consciousness. The fact that this has not yet happened accounts for the feelings of many Israeli Jews that the outside world cannot be trusted to care about their security. It also explains the belief of many Jews that rampant anti-Israeli passion in Europe is the modern, politically safe form of traditional Christian anti-Semitism. And sadly, it accounts for the frank statements by some of my closest American Jewish friends to me when discussing this issue that Israel is an essential safe haven for them if significant anti-Semitism breaks out in this country.

As for the need for Muslim leaders to condemn anti-Semitism, I agree that it is critically important. For example, I have supported the efforts of contemporary Moroccans to focus on Fez as a symbolic center of refuge for Jews after the expulsion from Spain by the Catholic kings in 1492, even as Moroccan scholars acknowledge periods of discrimination against Jews in their history. Jews have praised King Mohammed V for rejecting demands from Vichy France to surrender Moroccan Jews during World War II. And King Hassan II, Mohammed V’s son, met with Moshe Dayan and other Israeli officials well before it was fashionable in trying to promote peace with the front line Arab countries and the Palestinians.

As for your reference to the vicious anti-Jewish TV serial in Jordan during this Ramadan, it is, in fact, a good case for supporting interfaith dialogue. I received information from Marc Gopin on October 25, that when he heard of the program, he informed his Jordanian government contacts. He learned that the program was not on official Jordanian TV but a station operating in a so-called media free zone. Marc told the Jordanians, with whom he developed close ties while organizing the meeting between King Abdullah II and the American rabbis mentioned earlier, that the program threatened to undo all the good will that the King had intended. He was able to report to some of the American rabbis that the Jordanian Royal Family wanted them to know that as soon as they heard about the program they knocked it off the air for good. This is a partial answer to your question on what kind of interfaith dialogue can help the Muslim community to squash Jew-hatred.

As far as the impetus to anti-Semitism given by Quran 2:65-66 and 7:166 (“apes despised and rejected”), 5:59-60 (“apes and swine”) and 9:30 (Ezra and sons of God), this appears to be of the criticism of Christians and, especially, Jews, who, inter alia, are “eating of things forbidden”

(5:62). This is summarized in 5:66, “If only they had stood fast by the law (Torah), the Gospel, and all the revelation that was sent to them from their Lord, they would have enjoyed Happiness from every side.” Here, as above, the Torah and Gospels are honored, and those Jews and Christians who transgress them are criticized.

Let me wrap up with a report from another colleague and rabbi Mark R. Cohen, a professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton. He was writing in the Forward of July 22, 2005, from Doha, Qatar, where he had just participated in a Muslim-Christian-Jewish dialogue hosted by the ruler, Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. In 2003 and 2004, there had been no Jews in the dialogue. But the Shaykh proposed at the 2004 session that it might be “useful to widen the dialogue in next year’s seminar to [include] the participation of representatives of the Jewish religion which concurs with Islam and Christianity in the belief in the oneness of God.” (Muslim hardliners in Qatar, where Wahhabism is the dominant school among the clergy, balked at including Israeli rabbis in 2005, but Cohen expects them to be in Doha in 2006.)

In his speech in Doha, Cohen, author of the acclaimed, “Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages,” (Princeton, 1994), contrasted the experience of being Jewish under Christian as opposed to Muslim rule. He said. “Jews living Muslim lands, even when in recent centuries they were downtrodden and sometimes oppressed, felt embedded in the society around them, and friendships with Muslims often outweighed enmity.” He concluded with a call for much more Islamic-Jewish dialogue within the Muslim world, saying, “We need it desperately, lest the hatred of the present, existing on both sides, completely snuff out the memory of the age-old commonalities of the Judeo-Islamic tradition, which could form the foundation of a meaningful and peaceful discussion of what has bound us together in the past and can, with good will, bring us together in the present and the future.”

Muslim extremists completely distort and degrade their religion by twisting its values and falsifying the basic texts. All of us Jews, Christians and, indeed, Muslims--who want a peaceful future for our children need to study the original texts of Islam and their founding philosophy and deprive the extremists of their claims to religious legitimacy. And we should all work to bring to justice all violators of human rights.

**FP:** Tell us some of the interfaith dialogues that are in motion right now, will be in motion in the future, and perhaps what grounds for optimism they provide for the future. Are you personally optimistic?

**Montville:** There are two activities that come immediately to mind. One is not a dialogue per se, but rather a continuous engagement. A close colleague of mine, Edward Miller, an Orthodox Jewish lawyer in New York, wrote and published a beautiful book called, “Vision of Abraham: The Intertwined Stories of Islam and Judaism Told Through Images” (Amana, 2005), with important support from Alan Slifka, founder of the Abraham Fund.

Miller used high-resolution color photographs of ancient maps and coins with Hebrew and Arabic script to illustrate the shared historical narrative of the Middle Eastern peoples. His text is very accessible to ordinary readers, and what’s more, it reflects the advice and approval a numerous Jewish and Muslim scholars and clergy in the United States, Israel and Palestine.

Because of his passionate devotion to his task, Miller was invited by a large Muslim weekly newspaper serving the greater New York metropolitan area, to write a regular column offering his perspectives on Israel, the peace process and Muslim-Jewish relations. There have been ups and downs, but the Muslim editor and Miller have stuck faithfully to their deal. And he has found an editor of an important Jewish weekly who is ready to give space to Muslim columnists on the same principle of giving a voice to the other side.

The other thought is an elaboration on the fact that King Abdullah II of Jordan met with sixty American rabbis in September noted above. At the end of his speech, the King said, “It is my hope that we as children of Abraham can go forth from this gathering with a common mission to work together toward peace, justice and reconciliation.” This year marks an unusual concurrence of the High Holy Days of the Jewish calendar and Ramadan on the Islamic calendar. These are opportunities for self-examination, reflection, repentance, atonement, forgiveness, and renewal. “Just as Isaac and Ismail were able to put aside the differences that had separated their mothers and come together to honor and bury their father, so too must we put aside the differences that some use to tear us apart. We must honor our common heritage, reaffirming the essential principles that lie at the heart of our faith.”

Prince Ghazi, King Abdullah’s cousin, strongly supports this Muslim-Jewish reconciliation process, and he is organizing a follow-up meeting in Jordan in the winter to bring many of the American rabbis to continue this really unprecedented Jewish-Muslim reconciliation initiative launched by a direct descendant of the Prophet.

**FP:** Mr. Montville, thank you for joining us.

**Montville:** Thank you, Jamie, for having me do this. You made me work hard, but the cause of engagement and dialogue made it all worth while.

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