
A Good Faith Trip To The Arab World

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

Dear Friends and Family and Church:

I am writing this note as a general one, so that many can hear a quick word about my trip. I call what I am doing "A Good Faith Trip to the Arab World."

I, and six other Episcopal priests, are visiting Egypt, Qatar, and Oman, in good faith. This means at least three things. First, we are here to witness to a good God. That is our faith. We know that this good God has witnesses in the Christian tradition, and we also know that this good God has witnesses in the Islamic and Jewish traditions. We profess faith in the God who is all merciful and all compassionate.

Thus, we have visited the great Islamic center of learning in Cairo, Al-Azhar University, said to be the oldest university in the world. We will visit with imams in Qatar this weekend. We will discuss what it means to be in inter-faith dialogue in the world today. In fact, we will witness to peace and truth in the name of this good God.

Secondly, we have also met with Anglicans in Egypt who were disappointed in recent actions of the American Episcopal Church. We have heard their pain, and we have discussed what it means to walk together. We seek to walk with them in good faith. I believe there is a good God who sees beyond our present differences, and who longs for unity in the kingdom of God.

Thirdly, we are here "in good faith," in the discussion sense of the phrase. We mean conversation in good and open trust. We will speak openly about our own experience of God and God's people. Sometimes these conversations will not be comfortable, but they will have integrity. They will be good and trustworthy. In fact, we want to be open about our own faith as we hear from others who are open about theirs.

Finally, of course, we are here to make good faith connections and relationships with God's people across the world. As Americans, we want to see first-hand both the world's needs and the world's contributions to goodness and hope. We will see both, from the poverty of Cairo to the glittering coastal development of the Arabian peninsula.

I believe that "good faith" is what the world needs. I note that we are visiting a land that has benefited from enormous reserves of oil and gas, which have supplied the world with abundant physical energy.

But the world needs more than just the energy that runs our cars and air conditioners. The world needs the energy of good faith. The world needs all compassion and all mercy; the world needs abundant life. I hope that this trip, and this remarkable Arab land, and my own tradition of Christianity, can help provide this energy of good faith.

Grace and Peace to you,
Sam Candler
From Doha, Qatar

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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