

## **“Standing Together: A Grassroots Model of Christian - Muslim Dialogue and Study”**

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Abstract:

In the post- 9/11 era, it became clear that there needed to be an ongoing dialogue between Christians and Muslims. In January 2006, the Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord, along with Jihad Turk (Director of Religious Affairs for the Islamic Center of Southern California), convened The Christian-Muslim Consultative Group, a group of Christian and Muslim leadership in Southern California. This group, representing leadership in the mainline Christian denominations and several of the largest and most influential Muslim organizations in Southern California, was created to promote learning, dialogue, and advocacy among the representative members of the CMCG and their wider communities of faith.

Beginning in 2008, the members of the CMCG developed the concept for Standing Together in response to a collective realization that there did not appear to be any study guides on Islam and Christianity that were developed by teams of Christians and Muslims working in partnership on the same materials. This paper will discuss the origins and aims of Standing Together and its unique, grassroots approach to interfaith dialogue of pairing mosques and churches to engage in a series of eight sessions of study, conversation, and community-building using Standing Together materials (including a DVD). Participating in Standing Together groups not only encourages Muslim and Christian neighbors to engage with one another about beliefs, but also to converse informally and socially, laying the foundation for future projects and collaborations among people and communities.