



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2010

Mosque Controversy Obscures Bigger Issue

Golden, CO...As the media frenzy around the controversy over a proposed mosque within blocks of Ground Zero has continued to grow, and verbal and physical attacks against Islamic people take place, I am struck with the thought that many Americans have forgotten some basic tenets of not only the U.S. Constitution, but also of civility and common decency. While I appreciate the raw feelings surrounding the site, which has rightly become sacred ground in the nine years since the fall of the World Trade towers, it does not make sense to me to deny rights to groups who had nothing to do with the tragedy. September 11th was not an act of Islam. It was an act of terrorists who distort the precepts of that religion.

As the Community Spiritual Leader for United Centers for Spiritual Living, I have had the honor of traveling throughout the Middle East and experiencing Islamic people firsthand. Hospitality is a profound spiritual practice that lives at the heart of their religion. It stretches back to the patriarch Abraham – acknowledged as the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam – who kept his tent open on all sides to welcome any traveler.

Our organization teaches that there is a deep and essential unity underlying our apparent differences. Underneath diversity is the shining reality that there is only One God, One Life shared by all. Consequently, we honor all paths to God, understanding that each religion has a golden thread of truth. We know that, as Albert Einstein said, we cannot solve a problem with the same consciousness that created it. Fear and hatred will never transform fear and hatred to create a peaceful world. We need to envision a world beyond what we now know; a world free of war, homelessness, hunger, poverty, disenfranchisement and terror – a world of peace, freedom, justice, caring, compassion and unity. The bigger issue, then, is not the proximity of one piece



of sacred ground to another. The issue is finding *common* ground to create a peaceful, tolerant world that works for everyone.

Rev. Dr. Kathy Hearn is the Community Spiritual Leader for United Centers for Spiritual Living, a global organization that provides spiritual tools to transform personal lives and help make the world the better place. To find out more go to www.unitedcentersforspiritualiving.org

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