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“Crossing Boundaries: Mobilizing Faith, Diversity and Dialogue”

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**ABSTRACT**

“ ‘We Have Made You Peoples and Tribes’ ...  
A Qur’anicallly-Based Vision of Multi-Culturalism”

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The Qur’an is often misconstrued and sometimes even reviled by some as a book that preaches hatred and intolerance. This impression is influenced in no small part by the actions of terrorists who portray themselves as Muslims acting in the name of Islam. However, the text is not the exclusive property of those individuals and groups who make up only a small fraction of the world’s Muslims. It is a text with nearly a 1500 year history of interpretation and implementation, which is read today as the sacred text of more than a billion of the world’s people, from various cultures in both the East and the West. This work seeks to present a literal and holistic reading of the Qur’an’s verses related to humanity, intercultural, and inter-religious relations from the perspective of a 21st century American-Muslim woman and academic scholar of religion. By literal and holistic, I mean a reading that focuses on the literal meanings of the Arabic text read within the context of the Qur’an as an entire book, applying the interpretive principles of *tafsir al-qur’an bil-qur’an* (explaining the Qur’an with the Qur’an) in light of current global concerns. Such a reading offers Qur’anic basis for inter-religious and intercultural understanding and cooperation in striving to achieve social justice for humanity.