

WHAT DO A BILLION MUSLIMS REALLY THINK?

May I take this opportunity to thank you for the kind invitation to join you this evening for the documentary screening of “What a Billion Muslims Really Think”. I want to welcome the Imams, elected officials and guest speakers, and thank all the community leaders and volunteers of the Muslim Council of Calgary, who represent the 60,000 Sunni Muslims that call Calgary home. We have a proud Muslim community in Calgary that is comprised of many generations – many of whom have been born here – all part of nearly 750,000 proud Canadians.

Our Province was founded by those who came here for a better life. They represented a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. This was the beginning of our multicultural origins. It has defined who we are today and what we value. Muslims have been an integral part of the mainstream Alberta mosaic for over a hundred years. In Calgary, Muslims will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2011.

Our quality of life in Calgary is second to none in the world because of the rich diversity of our citizens and our heritage. A recent cross-Canada poll ranked Alberta the highest in our attitudes and openness to others, and reaffirms the kind, caring and respectful relationship that we value with each other.

All Calgarians including you and I agree that imported extremist religious and political viewpoints of any kind are not welcome here in Calgary. They hinder the smart integration which has enabled minorities in our community to be valued as an asset. As a community, we are vigilant in protecting our community against any extreme action or activity – by anyone. We take exception to anyone who tarnishes or threatens the harmony we value both at home and abroad. We all are responsible for shielding the vitality of our multicultural community.

The Sunna teaches us that wherever Muslims go in the world, they should bring goodness to that land. Muslim families in Calgary work hard for both moral and material goodness in our community, and in so doing, enrich our community and bring goodness.

On behalf of Mayor Bronconnier, I wish you a Happy and Blessed 1431 New Hijri Year.

What do a billion Muslims really think? Thank you.