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# Duke University Interview with Dr. C. Eric Lincoln

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

[music]

Bruce Lawrence: Good afternoon. I'm Bruce Lawrence, professor in the Religion department at Duke University and I'm pleased to introduce the speakers at this occasion when we are continuing the tradition of Living History at Duke. History never stands still. Time always moves on. We are pleased that at this moment in time in the history of Duke and department of Religion, it's possible for three of us who are colleagues in that department to be hosting a visit of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad to the Duke University Campus. And I'm going to introduce my fellow panelists and also my colleagues in the Religion department at in a moment. But I like to begin by thanking many, many, groups that made this possible. And among them, first among them is Dr. C. Eric Lincoln who is seated on my right who is instrumental in both initiating and making possible the arrangement of this visit, and the Department of Religion, and also the Center for International Studies, and the Black Students Alliance, and the Living History program, and Film and Video at Duke have all helped make this event possible. As have many local Muslim leaders and none more than Imam Wahid. So we're grateful for all they're effort and for the contributions they've made to this event which we're now going to film.

I'd like to begin on the far right by introducing my friend and colleague, Dr. Vincent Cornell, who like Dr. Lincoln and myself is a professor in the Religion Department of Duke and is a specialist in North African Islam and in the whole pre-modern period of Muslim history, and is also himself an American Muslim. I'm pleased that Dr. Cornell could be at Duke, first of all, I'm especially pleased that he could be at Duke and be with us this afternoon. Seated on my immediate right is Dr. C. Eric Lincoln who presides as a giant in a land of pygmies. We all think we have stature until we seat next to, or stand next to Dr. Lincoln. And he has achieved things which are monumental in any lifetime. And it is an awesome privilege to be able to call myself his colleague. And in all the years that I've known C. Eric I never would've dreamt that I'd be here with him on a program like this, where we are esteemed to have a visitor of the eminence of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad.

But Warith Deen Muhammad, like C. Eric Lincoln, shares a part of the history that we're going to see and then we're going to record this afternoon. So I think it's especially fitting that he'd be included as the center figure in the three of us who are sitting opposite Imam Warith Deen Muhammad who is on my left and whom I have known on only one occasion. But that one of intensely good memory when we were both representatives of the American participant, American legation that went to Fez, Morocco for an International conference of the Tijania. And Imam Warith Deen Muhammad and I enjoyed many moments together in that conference. And I hoped I'd see him again sometime. But again I never dreamt it would be at Duke. I never dreamt it would be on an occasion such as this, for Living History. So welcome. I'm very pleased to see you again here and to have you with us.

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad: Thank you, Bruce.

Bruce Lawrence: I'd like to begin with you, C. Eric, and allow you to initiate questions or to engage in conversation with Imam Warith Deen Muhammad as you see fit. The stage is yours.

Dr. C. Eric Lincoln: Thank you very much. Imam Mohammed, I'd like to reminisce a little bit because as this a program in Living History. You and I have lived in history together. And I first met you more than 35 years ago.

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad: Yes.

Dr. C. Eric Lincoln: You were a member of what was called The Nation of Islam. Which was headed by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. And at that time the Nation of Islam was considered a very exotic kind of movement. I was a young scholar at that time and in doing research on the nation, I coined the phrase "The Black Muslims of America" and it sort of stuck. Who were the Black Muslims? Well, at the time, they were people who were very much concerned, in their own words, "to learn the truth about themselves, and to learn the truth about the white men."

They were people who were engaged in trying to somehow offset the destruction, and the turbulence, and the pain of racial prejudice and racial segregation. And they were given to understand that at that time, that they were people who had a very distinctive history. That they were the people of Allah, and that it was Allah's will and intention that they would someday be restored to the unique positions of power and glory, that they had once enjoyed. Their leader was your father, the honorable, Elijah Muhammad.

One of the features of The Black Muslim movement at that time was the expectation that there would be an Armageddon, a day of judgment. When the racial situation would be in effect, reversed. When good would overcome evil, and the black man would be restored to his proper place in the world. The Nation of Islam at that time featured a number of very positive kinds of programs. For example, the Muslims were taught to own businesses so that they could be economically independent.

And in that instance, they owned small bakeries and stores, and restaurants and present jobs. They also owned extensive farmland. They owned at one time a fish-producing business. And later they owned a printing plant, one of the most modern in the country, an airplane and so on and so on. All in keeping with Elijah's teachings that, "You must be independent economically, you must be able to go for self" as he put it.

There were other kinds of teachings. Among them was that the white man was a devil by nature. And that there would be no peace in the world until the devil had been subdued and had been overcome. In the meantime, the Muslims were taught to practice an intensive kind of brotherhood. Each Muslim was responsible not only for himself and his family, but for every other Muslim. Muslims were also taught that "to be respected they must be respectable." "They must give a full day's work for a full day's pay." "They must not enter into wage slavery by immersing themselves in debt." That they must be willing to make the sacrifices that are always necessary for people to lift themselves." They were taught that "they were a people of power, members of the tribe of Shabazz, waiting for the coming of the Armageddon when they would be properly reunited with their true G-d, whose right and proper name, they said was, Allah." These were the days of Elijah Muhammad and Malcom X and later Louis Farrakhan and these were the days when eventually you would be a minister in one of the temples itself. Those days have passed.

What is the reason for the transition and what has the transition accomplished? Where is it going from here?

Imam Warith: Dr Lincloln, first let me express appreciation on behalf of my associates throughout the country for that very clear and accurate, I believe you used the term reversing back into history, reminiscing. I have to express my appreciation because as you were relating it, I could see that time so clearly and you didn't miss nothing that was important at all. I appreciate that very much.

I see the transition as coming about because it wouldn't have been possible without first something happening or being already included in teachings that you've just given us so clearly to make it possible. And Elijah Muhammad, late leader and we always pray G-d forgiveness for whatever his sins were or his errors were, and grant him paradise. His intent was good, was sincere and we do believe that he was turned on to certain influences, certain language in his teachings that he received from Fard, his teacher, and he knew it was his duty to keep those kinds of influences alive in us especially in myself as his son that he hoped to one day succeed him or at least follow in his shoes, as he would say. So I am very, very clear and convinced that those creators of the Nation of Islam, or The Black Muslims, they intended for it to one day make a transition.

And I was selected as a person to be a part of that. I was given the name Wallace D Mohammed; one of the names that Fard himself used, he used Wallace D. I am told that my mother, father, brothers and sisters all supported it. I was told, occasionally when they would see me getting too interested in my associates or things that boys normally get interested in, they would remind me that I had work to do. I had to follow my father in his work. That was most of all responsible for it. But also changing times.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he recognized that America was changing. The civil rights movement was bringing about change. The attitude of the people, of the society itself, not just the law was changing but the attitude of the white people was changing toward us and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he wasn't ignorant of that. He began to soften some of his language by putting emphasis on other language, that's how he would soften it, he would put emphasis on other language and give less attention to the hard language. So Dr. Lincoln, that's what made it possible.

Dr. Lincoln: That reminds me of a great controversy that came about after the differences arose between Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. I don't know if you remember but I remember quite vividly that in the old days when Malcolm first became a sort of spokesman for the movement, he was forbidden to speak before or to any white people. At that time I was a graduate student at Boston University and in a very intensive pro seminar that we had there, I had let it be known that I knew Malcolm X and there was a real interest in having Malcolm X come to Boston University and address the seminar which included both professors and graduate students from Boston University, MIT and Harvard.

So I got in touch with Malcolm and Malcolm in turn got in touch with Elijah Muhammad, and to everybody’s great surprise, he was permitted to come and to address this very learned seminar at Boston University. I will never forget that day Malcolm came in with an honor guard of about fifteen Muslims including his protégé Louis Farrakhan. The professor from Harvard who sat next to me said, "Oh my G-d, everyone of them has on a Brooks Brother suit [laughs] but history was being made at that moment.

Malcolm came and in an hour and a half lecture he had so impressed these very well educated people that they gave him a standing ovation. The next week I had a call from a professor at Harvard that said, “Hey, can you get Malcolm to come over to Harvard to speak to us?” So I went through the same routine again and Malcolm went through the same routine and, lo and behold, he spoke at Harvard. The second time that he had ever spoken or any Muslim had ever spoken to anyone outside the black contingency. The next call I got was from Malcolm X. And Malcolm says, “Look here Professor Lincoln, I don't mind speaking to those devils, but can’t you get me a chance to speak at some black college somewhere?” So I sent him to Clark College in Atlanta and then to Morehouse. And this began his ministry to college students all over the country.

I just wanted to introduce that little figment of history because I think it is important.

Imam Warith: It is very important. I recall Malcolm impressing my father as soon as he was released from prison. He was serving time in prison for some violation. I can't recall right now just what the violation was but it was serious. I think he as given a 14 year sentence. He was about to come out and one of the members of the community and also his eldest brother named Wilfred had gone to the prison and had been informing Malcolm of what was going on in The Nation of Islam and Malcolm had already accepted the religion and my father was already aware of his sharp mind, so when he came out, my father immediately made him a minister, made Malcolm a minister. And I recall him going on college campuses at that time that you have mentioned. In fact I recall his engagements at those places that you have mentioned, especially Clark and he was very excited about that.

I recall Honorable Elijah Muhammad reminding him of a danger [laughs] and he told him that he was allowing him to do things that he hadn't allowed any other minister to do and it was because he had faith in him, he said, and he said he'd been waiting for someone who had the ability to speak his message and deliver it to a non-Muslim audience. He said that he wanted more visibility for the Nation of Islam and that was the reason for it. He wanted more visibility for the nation of Islam.

He had began to get into business and he felt he was ready then to be introduced. He wanted to compete with Christian Black America for the black following.

Dr. Lincoln: Well, here I had a bit of [unintelligible 00:19:58] which I think is also important to be seen in the context. I think that Elijah's faith in Malcolm was well placed, and I'll tell you why. Despite the fact that after the controversy arose between Malcolm and Elijah, this for my money was largely a controversy in the press. The press did some very terrible things there. Also, people who became instant authorities on the Muslims who have never seen a live Muslim close up, who had never studied the movement and so on.

Put forth some projections and some theories that, I think, were most unfortunate and altogether untrue. I say that for a number of reasons. One is that then the days when I was researching the Muslims, Alex Haley, Malcolm X, and Lou, what was Lou's name, newspaper man, Palla, Palma. Valla, Palma, I can't think of it at the moment. We sent the rest of them down in Harlem talking. And Lou was saying to Malcolm, "You know, you are too smart to be following somebody called Elijah Muhammad. Why don't you pull out and go on your own and be somebody in the world."

Malcolm leaped up from the table as if he had been stuck by an ice pick. He was so angry until his face was flushed. I thought he was going to strike the man. He said, "You know, we had been friends for years but don't you ever say that to me again. Don't you ever say that to me" He said, "Elijah Muhammad is responsible for what I am today. Everything that I am, he made me and I don't want you to ever say that to me again."

I couldn't help but mark that in my memory. The next documentation of that sort that I had was I had come to know Elijah Muhammad and I was out in Chicago on an occasion to interview him. It was a Saturday morning, and as you know, on Saturday morning, he very frequently called in his various ministers to teach them on Saturday so that they would know what to say on Sunday while I was present at that meeting, at that teaching.

There were, I guess, 10 or 12 ministers seated around the table, were avidly listening to what Muhammad had to say when the doorbell rang. Mrs. Muhammad went to answer the doorbell and she came back and she whispered to her husband. She said, "The boy is here" And in came Malcolm X, tall, gangling, gawking, grinning. I have never seen such affection between two men. That's when Elijah Muhammad got up and they embraced. You could see that this was a father and a son who not only respected each other, but who loved each other.

Imam Warith: That's right.

Dr. Lincoln: The next documentation that I had of the mutual respect and affection between those two people was that at the height of the controversy when Malcolm made the remarks about Kennedy and the chickens coming home to roost. The New York Times, and the Saturday Evening Post, together, commissioned me to do a story on what was happening. They gave me the largest advance I have ever received, and I flew out to Phoenix to interview Elijah Muhammad. Elijah told me at that time. He said, "It's nothing but a shame. It's a [unintelligible 00:24:44] "

He said, "The boy knows that all he has to do is to come on home and take his punishment. He made a mistake." He said, "Islam means submission. So he must come and submit, and then we will go on as before." Then he made another statement. He said, "But Professor Lincoln, I've got to know which way the wolf is going to jump. What he was fighting once more of the press, the inundations in the press, the things that had been said and had no relationship whatever to Elijah and to Malcolm [unintelligible 00:25:29] Something that you said a little bit earlier fits in very well with what I'd knew all the time. And that is that in the latter years of his life, Elijah was beginning to gain "respectability" in the whole community.

He had made the transition from being purely exotic and someone who was altogether negative, and as you said, he was saying more positive things than he had said before, and he was getting increasing respect to the savior's day meetings. By this time, the politicians were coming from Chicago, from New York, from Philadelphia. The businessmen from Chicago were sending representatives and so on. Elijah was beginning to enjoy the respectability that he thought he always should have had. That people understood him. At just this moment, at the time that he was reaching for respectability, Malcolm made his unfortunate statement. That would shatter any move toward respectability that Muhammad wanted so much so he had to set Malcolm down. He had to set him down. That was what that was all about. Those other tales by instant experts on Islam were most unfortunate.

Imam Warith: I couldn't agree more with that.

Dr. Lincoln: Thank you.

Imam Warith: The honorable Elijah Muhammad was very hurt, and I happened to be at the house when he made the statement after Malcolm's assassination. He said, and he was sitting with his head kind of hung and he was sad, he said, "I wish they never would have done that." That's what he said. I've expressed this before to the people of the press. I couldn't see it at that, believe me, because I knew their relationship too like you did. I couldn't see how that that relationship had to really be changed to one of hate for each other.

Dr. Lincoln: No it did not.

Imam Warith: It was instigated. Fear and distrust.

Dr. Lincoln: After Malcolm had gone to the middle east, and Africa and so on, during this period of contention and had come back to the United States, he was going to hold a press meeting at the New York Sheraton. I was living in New York at the time. I went down to the Sheraton, an hour before the time when the press briefing because I wanted to talk with Malcolm privately. I said, "What are you going to do?" He said, "To tell you the truth Professor Lincoln, I don't know. But there's one thing I am not going to do. I'm not going to start any counter movement in opposition to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad." He said, "I couldn't do that." He said, "I might open a school to teach people how to be Muslims but I am not going against my teacher." That is what he said to me. That is not what came out in the press.

Imam Warith: I know. But he became a very desperate man. That is because the language that was used by the ministers and captains and their lieutenants was of the nature to signal violence against Malcolm. Not to order it directly, but to trigger it.

Bruce: Could you say about where Louis Farrakhan was in all this at that time?

Imam Warith: He was among the ministers. There wasn't any single minister to blame for that kind of language. It was, being a son of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and knowing his teachings, his laws very well. When Malcolm was charged with being one that's trying to undermine the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's credits. He was later charged with it because he got desperate and he made attacks upon the person of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

I would have to say that I would have had to make a decision that would have been very hard for me. Whether to join that language, join them in that kind of language or separate from it. It would have been- that would have been a hard decision for me. I wasn't in the Nation at that time. I had been ex-communicated, too. I was ex-communicated. So I wasn't there that time.

Bruce: What year was this roughly?

Imam Warith: This was about '63-

Dr. Lincoln: '63, '64

Imam Warith: About '64. Five years. Most '64. If I had been there, I would have had the-- I think I would have had the--I would have left. I would have had to leave. I would just have to be put out. For not joining that language. I know me, I couldn't have joined that kind of language. But it would have been difficult for me to make that decision because we felt that if anybody threatened the power, image, control of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, that we are supposed to condemn him, not to hesitate. We're supposed to be against them, very strongly against them.

If I wasn't prepared to make that decision, then I knew that I had to be prepared to be ex-communicated. I don't blame any particular minister. I blame them only for human weaknesses. Then Malcolm's popularity, resenting his closeness with Honorable Elijah Muhammad. I blame them for those human weaknesses, but not for the climate that they created in which violence was done to Malcolm.

Bruce: You say you yourself were actually ex-communicated at that time.

Imam Warith: Yes.

Bruce: For those who don't know about this is the living history program, what happened between the time you were ex-communicated till you came back as the leader and the successor to Elijah Muhammad--the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Imam Warith: Yes [chuckles]. I kept coming back. [laughter] The first time I was ex-communicated, it was for-- I was suspected of giving Malcolm information on the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's private life. I was innocent. But I was ex-communicated. I asked that I be heard with Malcolm. They wouldn't grant that to me. When I say "they" I mean Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the surpreme captain -- they were holding a hearing. They didn't grant that so I had to be ex-communicated.

Bruce: What does that mean? What did you-?

Imam Warith: Ex-communicated meant that you don't have any contact with anyone in the Nation of Islam including your relatives. I couldn't call my mother. Even if I heard she was sick, I couldn't call the house and talk to her. That was his rule. That was the rule. And that was to make you think very seriously about going outside the-- You go out, you're out. You go out, you stay out. That's what it was for.

I disobeyed those rules. I didn't get to talk to my mother on the phone. I tried to call her a couple of times so I said, "Well, they ain't going to let me talk". I wrote letters. I would write letters, ask them how they're doing. I admit that I was using it to open them up again. It wasn't just keeping touch. I knew that I could open them up. They're human. I love them, they love me. And it worked. Eventually, my father would send me word that I could come back.

That happened three times. The last time it happened, it wasn't for anything. In fact, that's the--only once I was accused of giving that kind of information to Malcolm. The other two times it was for differing with the concept of G-d in the Nation of Islam. I was insisting upon the Muslims believing in the concept of G-d in the Quran, in the Holy book of the Muslims that my father gave us. That kind of language was not good for the Nation of Islam because they were using it differently. They had a different concept of G-d. I understood-

Bruce: How would you specify those two, just for people who don't know about-

Imam Warith: The concept of G-d that we were given was G-d incarnate. G-d in the flesh. G-d as a man. But even stronger than what we know of the other religions, and Christianity was one of them, the G-d incarnate for us was not a G-d that descended from an invisible reality into the body. We believe that the G-d was always like the Egyptian pharaohs.

Bruce: Oh I see.

Imam Warith: That the divinity was passed on from father to son. Nothing said of where it came from at all. Except on earth. In fact, we were told that G-d doesn't exist in any form except man and that there is no heaven except the condition that would come in you now. And there's no hell except the condition that would come in you now. There's no life after death except mental resurrection.

This is the kind of teaching that we were given. I believe the Sadducees of the Old Testament were very much like them, too, aren't they? [laughs]

Bruce: Yes.

Imam Warith: It's nothing new. I don't think we created this. Everybody wants to blame Blacks now for all these things. It came from somewhere else. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad had hurt in him when he told me I have to go. I knew. I know my father. He didn't want to put me out. He didn't have any real serious problem with me, believing the way I believed. The problem was what that would do to the community that he was heading. So I had to be put out.

He accepted me back after Malcolm's assassination. Again, I timed it. I say Malcolm is assassinated. I felt desperate, too. I said Malcolm was assassinated now. It was just before the convention, February convention. I said all those people get there. I said I would like to be standing by my father's side. We have to make a show of unity. I contacted my father and told him of my desire. He said, "Well son, this time you have to tell the people you are wrong."

Really, every time you're out, the rule was whenever you come back, the first thing you have to do is tell them. Admit to sin. But I didn't have to do it on the previous two times. For this time, he said, "You have to do it." I understood so I accepted.

I asked him, "Could I tell it like I wanted to?" He said, "How are you going to tell it?"

Bruce: [laughs]

Imam Warith: I said, "I'm going to say I shouldn't have questioned your authority." He said, "That's okay, son." And that's all I did. They accepted me back. They were so happy there was a thunderous applaud for me. The ministers and everybody at the convention. Place was filled, maybe 15--20,000 people there. They welcomed me back.

I stayed in good graces for some time. Then I was reported for saying something on the radio I was requested again. That got me in better shape with my father. He called me to the hearing. It was on a Sunday, the staff was there. All the big people there.

My father said, "Son, they gave me a tape of you on the radio." He said, "We're going to listen to it." He hadn't even listened, he was going to listen to it right in front of me.

Bruce: He got hurt, too?

Imam Warith: No. He saved it so he could play it while I'm there you see? He listened and at one point, he jumped up and he clapped [clapping sound]. My mother was there. He said, "Clara, isn't this what we wanted?" She had that bright smile of hers. She smiled and she nodded her head like that.

He actually wanted me to be different. He didn't want me to follow the language of the Nation of Islam. That tape was all together different from the language of Islam. It wasn't what we call orthodox Islam, but it showed that I had come into a different mind. That's what he wanted, I'm sure.

Bruce: All right. That's a great story. Vincent, I'd like to give you the opportunity to ask a question or two. This seems to be an appropriate time to maybe make a slight shift here and ask you for your intervention.

Vince: Okay, I'm afraid I don't have the ability to reminisce this time. It's the first time I've met you. I have to say that since first becoming exposed to Islam in 1971 and first embracing Islam in 1974, I followed you and your career extremely closely. As you know that was a time in which about the only American Muslims that one ever saw were African-American Muslims. European-American converts like myself were very rare. We've now come forward to a great extent to the point where now both groups are becoming more accepted in our own society.

What I'd like to do is to--since I have no ties with the past in that sense, what I'd like to do is to move things a little bit towards the future. Coming from the starting point of the fact that you're fairly considered by many people today to be the spokesperson for Islam in America, I was wondering in particular what kinds of ties your organization and the people who follow you have with international Islamic bodies, with various Muslim countries. Do you maintain close ties with them? Are they formalized kinds of ties or are they informal ties? What is the nature of these contacts that you carry on?

Imam Warith: Yes, we're fortunate. We began to get some support in terms of Islamic publications, Qurans from Raabata, World Muslim League, based in Mecca. It's an international organization, worldwide organization, and also from the Islamic Call Society. At one time we got the indication that they wanted to support us, Islamically. In time, things began to develop that brought us in direct contact with the Head of Department of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, Dr Abdullah (unclear) and with Dr. Nassif, the chairman [crosstalk] for Raabata. Also, as you know, I was given an invitation in Fez, I went there and participated at that meeting. Which is very important, very significant for us, as American Muslims. Who had made the transformation to the way of the way of the prophet, the Qur'an, and the way of the prophet. The prayers and peace be on him. That relationship has been, I'd say more informal than formal. We have always gotten, I'd say, an invitation from Pakistan, but we haven't yet made the connection. But the invitation is still there for us to have a real relationship with Pakistan. I'm anxious to see that materialize for us.

The king of Morocco also opened his arms to us in the same way. But no formal connections except with any country but Saudi Arabia. We do have a formal connection. A formal relationship with them. Is growing. I think it's still in its infancy but it is growing. In many ways, we have achieved great things because when we took the position that Saddam was the aggressor and his behavior was un-Islamic. We won more friends in Saudi Arabia, which is understandable.

[laughter] And we put ourselves at risk. In fact, I was there when the war broke out. I was there. The second day of my visit there the war broke out. That endeared us more to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and I had an opportunity with my associates, my colleagues on three occasions, big numbers of us like 16 and 21, big delegations, there in Saudi Arabia as guests of the department of higher education. On one occasion as guests of the king of Saudi Arabia, to see the industrialization. Industrialization there, what they had achieved there.

That relationship to me is one that I can't put a dollar value on. And I am hoping to build upon it. I have great respect for the school of thought of Saudi Arabia, I don't belong to any particular school of thought, and I don't advise any of my colleagues to begin to promote any one school of thought. I believe that in time our independent thinking will bring about a school of thought in America. Not alone by ourselves, perhaps with Muslims converted from America like yourself and others. That we will eventually have a school of thought in America. That's my hopes and that's my belief.

But to say we have any significant formal relationship, we don't. Not that you’re talking about where we have an ongoing contact and addressing--[crosstalk]

Vince Official contacts addressing various issues. For example, what's your relationship, and those of your associates, with say, religious authorities in the Muslim world? Not only in Saudi Arabia but outside of Saudi Arabia as well.

Imam Warith: I think it's good, but we're still missing the open lines of communication that we need. It's just an acceptance of each other. A free hand of friendship extended to each other. But real meaningful lines of communication are yet to be opened.

Vince: Do you see any organizations within the greater Islamic world that are particularly interesting to you in terms of your particular needs in the United States? Are there, say Movements of Islamic Reforms, Movements of Social Reform going on in the Muslim world today that you find particularly relevant to the condition and in particular of African-American Muslims here in the states?

Imam Warith: Yes, there are organizations, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Morocco, Sudan, Nigeria but its only, as I said, it's statement of interests in that right now. But nothing has actually transpired yet.

Vince: All right. In line with one of your responses, I'd like to ask a question about a statement made by President Rafsanjani of Iran, a couple of years back, in which he, at least has been reported in the press, is criticizing what he termed American Islam as being a laissez-faire liberal, sort of loose type of Islam that's in his words, at least as they've been reported, pose a threat to the goals of Islamic revolution of Iran and so the purity of Islam in general. I was wondering if, first of all, if you could make a comment on that particular statement, but also more broadly, do you see Islam in America developing in lines different from the development of Islam in the modern world, in countries outside of the United States and if so in what ways? What are the particular concerns or orientations of American Muslims that one would not find overseas?

Imam Warith: I had mixed emotions when I learnt over the news like everybody else that there was a hit out on him. He had been already sentenced to be executed.. Are you speaking on the one who wrote the--

Vince: No. I’m not speaking of Salman Rushdie, I'm talking about the statement made by the president of Iran, Hashemi Rafsanjani, in which he criticized American Islam as being a threat. Not Rushdie, not someone who's left the religion, but American Islam itself, being a threat to the goals of the Iranian revolution. And he criticized very roundly as sort of being the kind of Islam that is so liberal that it has no backbone. It has no real principles.

Imam Warith: Well, I'm getting that kind of criticism.

[laughter]

From Muslims that are Americans, I'm getting that kind of criticism. In fact, just recently, I got a letter and I was accused of trying to make Islam palatable to the Americans at the expense of Islam. But I accept that kind of criticism. In fact, I told the editor of our paper that they should put the letter in the paper and publish it.

Vince: I think I remember seeing that.

Imam Warith: Yes. Let the readers see what they're saying about me.

Bruce: It was an American Muslim who said this?

Imam Warith: Yes. American Muslims said this.

Bruce: A fellow American Muslim said that he thought, I'd say he was he rather than she, he thought that you were too weak on us [crosstalk] and therefore you were going against principles of Islam being a leader to American Muslim Community.

Imam Warith: To make it taste good in Americans mouth.

Vince: Was this a convert who said it or an Immigrant?

Imam Warith: I know it’s a Muslim.[crosstalk] That's my understanding. This was a converted Muslim. Most likely under some of these small schools of thoughts. In what we call Immigrant Muslim community Society. I accepted the criticism and I appreciate criticism. I want to be criticized.

I think that the people overseas and many immigrant Muslims here in this country haven't allowed themselves to really see America. They're carrying a hurt from the past, from the days of the crusades. The hurt of being not independent and in power. They're carrying all that burden on them and I think it won’t allow them to really see America as I can see America. I have come through three centuries slavery. I've gone past that. I realized that slavery was ended and I've gotten through the Jim Crow America's, segregated America, I accepted that. I'm in a much better shape to see America than many of my fellow Muslim brothers and sisters across the waters and even here in this country. But there is a change coming. I'm finding that more of the Muslim nationalized citizens, and immigrants, and students, more of them are expressing appreciation for, my, coming out and really trying to embrace the whole society and build upon what's good for all of us. Yet they're expressing to me appreciation. I think I got a real strong support outside of my own African-American members' associates. As for the difference, there's a great difference between the way Islam is taking roots and we're growing here and the way it happens -- the way it is overseas and in the immigrant Muslim Community. There is a big difference. I think the difference is this, we are American people. When you look at the history of Islam and you look how Islam took root in Mecca and grew, and then you look at how it took root in Indonesia, and in some other parts of the world -

Bruce: In India.

Imam Warith: In India, yes. You see, there is a difference. There's a difference. For us, there's a difference, and it's because the environment is so different. When you go far away from Saudi Arabia, you get a different kind of mind, a different kind of appreciation. That's the beauty of the religion; is that the same water feeds all the flowers, all the plants, and all the flowers, but they respond differently according to what's in their environment. The environment produce the difference. I think one of the main difference for us is that we appreciate freedom, we appreciate democracy, we appreciate the equality of man. We've just come out of slavery. There's a couple of fathers and mothers back with slavery for us. We appreciate the emphasis in the religion on respect for nature. I'm talking of the thinking, of the intellectual ones among us. Those are the ones that's going to really lead the rest of us. It's the intellectual minded people in our community.

We appreciate the emphasis on nature and our religion. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he gave us independence from white man's thinking. To us, we are not in shape to comment on anybody else's thinking. What he had left -- The condition he has left in us doesn't invite anybody else to come and put their thinking in to our heads. That makes the difference. That's what accounts for the difference. I thank G-d for that difference.

[laughs]

Vince: I have to say, as a historian of Islam, I have to agree with your point of view. When you look at Islamic history, there's no doubt that Islam has developed different manifestations and different aspects, and different cultures, and different societies, but one thing that I hear very commonly among the immigrant Muslim Community, in particular one hears that at Islamic centers, one hears this in the discussions that take place at Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Circle of North America, Islamic Society of North America, there is a counter-attitude that many people have in these organizations, that try to take the idea of the unity of G-d in Islam as a theological point of view. To assume that that means that the Islamic Community worldwide has to attain the same unity among itself, that the idea of one has to be transmitted throughout the Islamic world; one Islam, one community, one way of thinking, one core, and one meaning, this sort of thing. When I hear criticisms of either you or your associates, it tends to be on the lines that you're doing things that break away from this unity.

Imam Warith: Yes.

Vince: I was wondering if you could speak on this issue of, say, Unitarianism as a concept of G-d versus unity as part of the Islamic Community as a social dimension.

Imam Warith: Again, recently I've received a correspondence from one Islamic group of nationalized citizens from overseas, and they were expressing that same concern. They are asking just what you just expressed it. That's what they are asking for. They're saying that one G-d for us means also one community, and that we have to have one community and when we do things, we have to do it as one community. The sighting of the moon, we have to do that as one community. Everything has to be as one community.

My response to that is this, I believe that the one community is decided by two things, actually three. I would say three at the maximum. Our concept of G-d, our concept of prophet, and our concept of man, that's the unity. That is the unity. Concept of G-d, concept of the Prophet, concept of man. Of course, man and the prophet is same for us. The prophet is a common human being. He's just like we are as far as human is his nature. His nature is human, just like in all divine nature and our prophet. Our prophet cannot be G-d. He's not G-d, he'll never G-d. To me, that's the unity, and the Quran is the focus. That's what binds us all together.

We all read the same Quran that says the same thing. It gives us the same -- that idea about G-d, it gives us that idea about the prophet, it gives us that idea about the unity of man.

We know that language branches out into other areas of thought and knowledge, and that unity is all encompassing, all encompassing or all embracing, we know that, but to me, that's the focus for the unity. It's not our culture, not our way we dress, it's not the language we speak, it's not the -- even the thought in the religion. As long as our thoughts respects the essentials of Quran and essentials in the life of Mohammad the prophet, peace be on him, that's enough. We are encouraged even to have our own opinion as long as our opinion doesn't go counter anything established by the Quran and the life of the prophet.

We are encouraged to have our own opinions. Islam has had different schools of thought, still has -- the Islamic world still have different schools of thought, what's wrong with another school of thought? What's wrong with more opinion? I'm for more opinion, and I'm for more growth in Islam. I don't think we've stopped growing, Islam is not a static religion. That's my position.

Bruce: I wonder if, just another line, you could say a little bit of something that -- You can now talk about the unity man, and I know that you mean men and women, men and women, I wonder if we could have from you because I know that part of, part of what Dr. Lincoln and Dr. Cornell discuss is that there's this extraordinary development. You mentioned over lunch that things were all coming together in the last five years. I'd like to have you say for us now what you mean the last five years, but especially, if you could, Imam, say something about how that relates to Clara Muhammad School, the whole outreach for women and women's education. I think it's really distinctive. I don't think it's always been there.

Imam Warith: No

Bruce: I think it's happening now in a way it has never before. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Imam Warith: Yes. Again, in our religion, there is, in the days of the prophet, the idolaters, the idolaters the idol-worshiping people, they were known also to cheaply regard their women. The women were treated like they were only for mating, mainly for mating, and they could have any number of wives as they could afford it, and to divorce the wife, they only had to say "Out the door" or "Be to me as my mother" and she was thrown out. The prophet was guided by G-d to limit the number of wives to four under very heavy restrictions. For example, the average African American in Chicago won't qualify for more than one wife. In fact, many won't qualify for one.

Bruce: [laughs]

Imam Warith: No. You have to have a dowry. You have to have a dowry, you have to have some insurance, you have to have some guarantee that you will be able to take care of this woman. The prophet also allowed the woman to have a public voice, a public voice.

Bruce: Because she was his wife?

Imam Warith: Yes, and you are aware about one of the Khalifa's being challenged by a woman in the public. What she said was correct, and the Kalifa yielded to her. He yielded to her voice. When I read those things, to me it said, keep moving with more freedom for the women in the following of the Hon. Elijah Muhammad when I came into the power, into leadership. The Hon. Elijah Muhammad, he had done some things already that was remarkable. The sisters had their own independent unit, the MGT, the Muslim girls training class, they were their own leaders; no men were to come in there and give them instructions, and The Hon. Elijah Muhammad put a woman as principal over the school in Chicago at one time. Some of the most powerful people in his staff were his secretaries, who were women. They had even -- They had power over many of the -- In fact, I remember Malcolm being so challenged by one of them until she was given him a fit. He came to Chicago to ask The Hon. Elijah Muhammad to (unclear).

[laughter]

Bruce: That's right. That's how Dr. Lincoln feels about Delores.

[laughter]

Imam Warith: Really, the stage was set for it. In my opinion, the religion sensitizes us to welcome the woman into a more dignified role and to accept that she is equal to us in essence. There is no superior essence for a man or a woman.

Bruce: How does that work in terms of Clara Muhammad School?

Imam Warith: It works very fine. It works very, very nice with the Clara and Muhammad school We believe that -- In our religion, we are told that the mother is the first teacher. The mother is the first teacher. We would like to see more women teachers especially in elementary school, and we'd like to see them stay with the school to the highest level, college level. We'd like to see them stay there. We have no problem with seeing a woman elected into administrative position over the college, if we had college, but right now we have high school and we have no problem with it. In fact at one time, a sister and I believe you know her, Zakiya Muhammad -

Bruce: We're going to meet her. We hope in the next month.

Imam Warith: Yes. Zakiya Muhammad was a convener for all the principals at the school, throughout the whole country. She was the convener. That's right.

Bruce: We've heard a great deal of really wonderful things about Zakiya Mohammad.

Imam Warith: We are looking for our women, our mothers. They're mothers, whether they are married or have children or not, they're our mothers. We're looking for our mothers to give us their special touch that they can give education and also our society.

Bruce: That's great.

[silence]

END OF SEGMENT ONE

Dr. Cornell: 30 seconds.

Bruce: Okay.

[silence]

Dr. Cornell: [inaudible 01:02:08]

[silence]

Vince: You were talking about how much of an important role women play in the educational system of your organization, and you mentioned that you would like to see women in positions of administration and authority in the Clara Muhammad School System. What other kinds of roles for Muslim women do you see in American society? Do you admit to any limitation on their role or do you feel that they should be as, at least ideally accessible to any role that they want to play in society as they are, say for Americans in general?

Imam Warith: Yes, yes. There is concern for the woman being put in any role that would say to society that we are not valuing her any more, firstly as a mother who provides the foundation for society in terms of the right attitude toward home life and the world, the society, moral development, appreciation for the values that we have in our religion. That's the foundation that's supposed to be laid, that's the woman's role. That's her job to lay that foundation and to feed the society, the whole society, with sensitivities, sentiments that is typical of the female, not the male. We value her for her feminine nature, for her refined feminine nature and we value her as a mother who lays the foundation for society, the teacher, the first teacher. Any role that she would be cast in that would threaten that image of her for society, for the Muslim Society or for the world would arouse serious concerns.

Vince: Can you give some examples of such roles? Are there any roles in the Muslim Society [inaudible 01:04:29] -

Imam Warith: Yes. I don't think I would ever feel comfortable with women leading tanks on the battlefield. I don't think I'd ever feel comfortable with women having a strong presence in construction work, just examples.

Vince: You seem to imply that apart from a certain sort of heavy labor type occupations or dangerous, front-line military occupations, there aren't any real or shouldn't be any real restrictions on the role of women in society, and that leads me back to something you said a while earlier when you mentioned that overall you agree with the approach to Islam that is practiced in Saudi Arabia, in terms of some of the points of their school of law and some of their orientations toward Quran and Hadith and other sources of Islamic ideas and thought, that seems to differ on the surface quite a bit from the attitudes of most Saudi religious leaders. Do you ever run across criticism from them for attitudes such as these or if you do, how do you deal with them?

Imam Warith: So far, I don't think they had that much aware of that side of me.

[laughter] I'm spared so far. When I spoke of me having a fondness of preference for their school of thought, I'm talking about the teacher, Imam Wahab and the Wahhabi School of Thought. I'm speaking of it in its totality. There are some aspects of it that I would definitely have some difficulty with. I feel comfortable to say that I think the present leaders, especially the king of Saudi Arabia, King Fahd, and the young ones coming up, the young princes. I do believe that they are beginning to question now their own previous perception of Islamic law. As you know, they came out with a statement that hit the Wall Street Journal, have made news in the New York Times, and there seems to be a real indication that we're going to see some democratic movement toward real democratizing of that society.

Vince: The structure of society?

Imam Warith: Yes, the structuring of the society along more democratic lines and I think that's only a beginning.

Vince: As you know, there's sort of an ongoing debate about the nature of Islamic law in the Muslim World and whether or not the schools of law should be maintained. If they are, what should be kept? If they aren't, what replaces them? Of course, that leads to a very germane question in regard to Islam in the United States. As you know, of course there are very few people in the United States at all who are trained formally as experts in Islamic jurisprudence.

Imam Warith: That's true.

Vince: What do you think Muslims in America ought to do about this? You mentioned also a while back that you thought there is coming a time in which America may have its own approach to Islam and perhaps its own interpretation of Islamic law. What is being done in the Islamic community here in America today as particularly in your community but in anything else you might have seen as well to foster the development of a new approach of this sort?

Imam Warith: Nothing yet in an organized way, but the interest is beginning to grow. I'm meeting with Imams from Pakistani community, which is a very large, perhaps largest one, the largest in America, and a few others. I'm getting the indication that they tend to favor more than disfavor this kind of thinking. A thinking of having our own school of thought one day in America.

Dr. Lincoln: Isn't it true that what we are really talking about is one faith and many cultures, and each culture brings to the faith its own interpretations of what the faith means. That is universal. It's not restricted to Islam, it is also true in Christianity and Buddhism, every other great religion because religion is, if it is anything at all, a projection of the experiences of the society. That's one of the things that religion is by its very nature, and the experiences of, say, these societies in the Persian Gulf are quite different from the experiences of a society here in America. There are going to be those cultural differences because we have varied sources from which we draw our values. The question, the critical question is whether one can reasonably maintain the critical values of his culture under the canopy of a universal faith. That's what the critical question is, and that raises another issue for myself and that is this. The great contribution of the Black Muslims as far as I am concern is that over 30 or 40 years they brought Americans to an awareness of a religion other than Judeo-Christianity. Before the coming of Elijah Muhammad there was no responsible awareness in this country of any other way of faith. True, the Nation of Islam was looked upon as exotic, but as it gained staying power and stayed and stayed and stayed it became less and less and less exotic. That today people walking down the street, if they meet a Muslim, they don’t feel that they have an extraordinary experience.

Vince: Only if they meet an African American Muslim.

Bruce: I’m sorry.

Vince: Only if he’s African American or she’s African American. When they’re Anglo American it’s quite extraordinary experience. [laughter]

Dr. Lincoln: At any rate, what the nation of Islam accomplished over its many years is to reduce the notion of exoticness about Islam in this country. The other thing was that the nation of Islam gave us what you might call a critical core of people who are Islamic. Never mind what shades of Islam. But, whenever there is a critical core, whenever you get to the point where people are no longer appalled or excited about the presence of a group then it is at that point that that group can begin to grow. It seems to me that that is what is happening now. That once you reached a certain point then it became no big deal for a person to decide to become Muslim. Now, the New York Times and everywhere, 1990 said that Islam had become the second major religion in this country.

That it had displaced Judaism in terms of numbers. I thought the Times figures were perhaps a little premature but nevertheless this is what they’re saying. But, the point is this. We do see an increasing presence of Islam all across the country. There are mosques where there were no mosques before. There are Muslims where there were no Muslims before and because of our various military, geopolitical and economic needs, there are more and more and more people who happened to be Muslims coming into the country and taking their place in the American society. Undoubtedly whatever the authenticity of the New York Times estimate, Islam is growing and growing and growing and growing. What do you see down the road?

Is the fact of the relatively rapid growth of Islam going to, for example, have a cultural fallout and if it is what would it be? Is it going to have political fallout and if it is what would it be? What do you see down the road as a result of the enormous growth of Islam and the past 10 to 15 years?

Imam Warith: I don’t see any real dangers down the road. I know that there is a good chance that there will be Muslims who for some reasons and most of it is lack of acquaintance with the American people, the plurality of the American people, in many cultures in this country. For example Chinese come here they keep to their old traditions. They live here and nobody disturb them. They live good lives here. They look successful here in America. They might not be seeing these things. They might not be seeing the truth and that is that America welcomes people to come here and enjoy the best things of America without changing their culture. You don’t have to change your culture. In fact America has provided for the plurality of the cultural life in this country that many ethnic groups and the different cultures live here.

That’s the beauty of America. Americans going back even to 30 and 40 years ago in my childhood, I remember hearing old people speak of the different -- they may have a problem with some of them, but they spoke of that as the beauty of America. That America opens her arms to all cultures, people of all culture. If Muslims can see that and appreciate that and identify in that plural culture of America and understand that a special invitation is extended to them just as it is extended to all other groups to live here in America, keep their identity I don’t think we have a problem.

But, already I am sensing that some Muslims do have a problem and they think that the culture, the melting pot, the culture of American threatens their culture. Some of them in haste are thinking to have some political influence so one day they can bring about some change not separate state like Elijah Muhammad called for, but something too drastic for us to live comfortably with each other in this country. I know that problem is there, but I don’t think there’s enough support for it. The support for it is weak. The support is growing for the kind of appreciation that I have and that you have and that most of us have for the openness of this country, the welcome in this country to people to come here and come with your religion, come with your culture and you have a place here in this country.

I think more Muslims, nationalized citizens, immigrants they’re beginning to believe that. They always knew what is said to them, but I think now they’re beginning to believe it. I think we have had a real role, Dr. Lincoln, in bringing about that awakening in nationalized citizens of this country from overseas. We have had a real role in awakening that in them and making them feel a little more comfortable with their identity. We’re not going to be Pakistanis, I'm telling Muslims themselves now. We’re not going all to become Pakistanis and Palestinians or Iraqis or Saudis we’re going to stay African Americans. A few of us drift off go out into the twilight zone on their own, but not with us. [laughter]

Bruce: But we do that in Christianity? [laughter]

Imam Warith: Yes, I don’t see any real danger down the road. I don’t think there’s going to be real cultural clash down the road.

Bruce: But, there are tensions aren’t there?

Imam Warith: There are tensions.

Bruce: In the years that I’ve been Muslim I had a chance to live in two of largest Islamic communities. That’s 10 years in Los Angeles and two years in the Chicago area. In both places, of course, the leaders of Islamic organizations always are saying the same thing. We have to transcend culture. We have to get back to the basic roots of Islam. We have to follow as you say the principles of Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahad and reconstitute the brotherhood of Medina at the time of the prophet and that sort of thing. But, in reality, of course, you know better than I do what happens in the Chicago area just about every mosque is ethnically oriented. You got one that’s almost all indo-Pakistani. You got one that’s Arab and Yugoslavian. The Arabs and Yugoslavian are at each other's throats.

Imam Warith: I like that.

Bruce: You got another --

Imam Warith: I don't like them at each other's throats [laughter] But, I like them sticking with their culture, sticking with their cultural traditions. I like that.

Bruce: But, then again you have situations too where, okay, they try to overcome the cultural traditions, but what happens is that to be perfectly personal about it your people and my people get cut out sometimes . One thing that Anglo Americans --

Imam Warith: We ought to get together and see what we can do.

Bruce: Or perhaps we make it start over your [inaudible 01:1852] it’s a great idea. [laughter] But, one thing that we've all tasted together is this idea from certain Muslim groups and organizations from people who come over to the United States that, well, welcome to the fold, your brother, but stay away from my sister.

Imam Warith: Yes.

Bruce: That’s an old story of course.

Imam Warith: You’re getting that too.

Bruce: Of course, sure, absolutely [laughter] we have more in common than you might think. [laughter] But, this is a real problem. I find also in dealing with many different Islamic Centers from these various communities that there is a difference in terms of needs and orientations between communities that are immigrant communities. This is something I think that even non-Islamic immigrants communities have had as well and those communities of people like ourselves who come from this culture and are born in this culture. What happens is that for example in education. In many Islamic Centers, the education of immigrant Muslims is designed to preserve what they are afraid of losing. The ideas is that what’s frightening to them is the melting pot you’re talking about. On one hand they’re happy that they can express their beliefs politically. On one hand, they're happy they can find people of their own kind and speak their own language, or something like that, but they're desperately afraid that their children are going to become Americanized.

Imam Warith: Okay.

Bruce: And so then, what happens is that the education for their children is what's stressed in Islamic education, not the education say of African-Americans or Anglo-American Muslims who might come in, and also, of course, there are very important bars to marriage. And types of social intercourse of that sort.

Imam Warith: Yes.

Bruce: Which I think are still real problems. And have you found in your own career that these difficulties tend to arise in your associations or your contacts with Islamic centers in the Chicago area or anywhere else you might have had that experience?

Imam Warith: Yes. You know my past, I've never been an integrationist, okay? So maybe I don't see a lot of things that others are seeing.

Bruce: Yes.

Imam Warith: Intermarriage, to me, is something that I don't want. Intermarriage with another people. I don't care if you've been a Muslim people [sic]. I don't want to see my children intermarry into a Pakistani family. Although, my brother has a daughter, married to a Pakistani man. But to me, I don't favor that. I'm not racist, but I have a race pride.

Bruce: Okay.

Imam Warith: And I think that it's Islamic to have a race pride. I'm not an ethnic who's fanatical, but I have ethnic pride. And the only hurt in me is that we haven't built upon a solid ethnic identity for African-American people. We haven't built on that enough.

Bruce: Okay.

Imam Warith: We have something to build on, too. But we haven't build on it enough. So I can't share this feeling with you too well.

Bruce: Okay.

Imam Warith: They can isolate me if they want to as long as it's not out of Islam. I'm comfortable. But my way is just that I think we need alliances, all people need alliances. And as a citizen of this country, my alliance is, first of all, with all the American citizens. But as a citizen of Islam, that's an international community. As a citizen of Islam, my alliance in America is, first of all, with American born people. The indigenous African-American people and Caucasian people, my alliance is first with them. Now, I know when the immigrant Muslims they're going to be surprised. But we know each other, we have more in common. We have the same life in common. So I think that makes more sense for me to be closer to you than to be close to somebody who I have to learn all about, and they have to learn all about me. And we have so many problems.

What I would suggest, more Native Americans get together, who are Muslims, and work for the good future Islam in this country. And at the same time, try to strengthen our relationship with all the ethnic groups or cultural groups that come from overseas. Do both.

Bruce: Do you see that there is a change coming in terms of the children of immigrants?

Imam Warith: Yes.

Bruce: Do you find them more culturally in terms of values and recognize them?

Imam Warith: Yes, and believe me, it's because of that attitude. They're only increasing the number of children that are going to leave them with that attitude that drive the young ones away from them.

Bruce: By being too insular?

Imam Warith: Yes.

Bruce: Yes.

Imam Warith: It drives the youngsters away from them.

Bruce: Okay.

Imam Warith: Yes.

Bruce: C. Eric, we are getting close to the bottom line, the end time. Do you have other remark, or question, or comment, or recollection that you want to share?

Dr. Lincoln: Yes. It was implicit in my question a moment ago that has to do with the political possibilities of the new Islamic presence. In more recent times, even the old Nation of Islam people have begun to vote, to hold office, whereas before, they shunned office holding. Now in orthodox Islam, which has taken in large numbers of African-Americans and which also includes now all of the ethnic groups that you were talking about, what kind of political response do you see in the future?

Imam Warith: Okay.

Vince: Do you see political alliances that we have not yet experienced?

Imam Warith: Yes, I do. But I don't think there's so much political alliances, well there are political alliances, but they're more private interest groups. There's a need for more Muslims to compete with private interest groups. The lobby, so I'm for that. And I do see support for that growing in the future.

Where more Muslims, regardless to what nation they came from or what their ethnic group is, they will be coming together to lobby for Islamic interests. But as far as the political blocks, I don't think we have that much in common to justify having one political block because our African-American situation is different from theirs. Theirs is different from the others, each one is different. I think our associates will always tend to vote with African-American Muslims and with non-African-American Muslims. That's what I would think.

Bruce: Well, I'd like to take this moment to reflect on what we've done and what we've been able to do this afternoon, thanks to the presence of this group of distinguished guests, and to thank Dr. Vincent Cornell for coming and bringing to us a perspective from an American community of Islam, those who have been immigrants rather than indigenous members of that community, and Dr. Lincoln for bringing Imam Warith Deen Muhammad here and bringing also his own memory bank that makes us all feel that 35 years could be retold in 35 minutes even if not all of it, at least some wonderful highlights. Especially, I'd like to thank Imam Warith Deen Muhammad for coming to Duke and making it clear for all of us that we are not the epicenter of the Muslim community, but for this afternoon, you made us feel very close.

Imam Warith: Thank you.

Bruce: Thank you very much.

Imam Warith: Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Cornell.

Dr. Cornell: Thank you very much.

[01:28:46] [END OF AUDIO]