

12/30/2016

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The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Gov. Haley:

When examining the text of this letter, if you ever do receive it, I ask that you please forgive the informality of my writing. I do not expect nor necessarily desire a response: the mere delivery of my words and the very possibility that they may resonate with your soul in some way is the primary motive behind the penning of this letter. Indeed, much like the divine silence experienced by the man who prays to his god, perhaps it is that uncertain absence which will serve me as a certain presence. If, in fact, you find this letter to be burdensome or distracting from your duties, I encourage you to discard it. In the event that this occurs, I send my apologies for allocating your time unreasonably.

Please, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Joshua Eargle, and I am currently in my junior year at Presbyterian College (Clinton, SC) where I serve as a student minister. I am also the president and founder of the student-led organization on campus known as the Association for the Advancement of Islamic Thought. I am majoring in Religion with a concentration in Philosophy as well as double minoring in Christian Education and English. My interests of study are mysticism, religious philosophy, historical criticism, Islam, Middle-Eastern politics, East Asian philosophy, and 20th century philosophy. Some of my inspirations are Simone Weil, Søren Kierkegaard, Nicholas of Cusa, Albert Camus, and Rumi. After I finish my undergraduate degree, I intend on applying to Harvard Divinity for my Master's. I'm sure this information seems confusing or even irrelevant to you, but I urge you to continue reading.

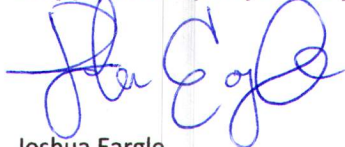
As it may be apparent to you at this point in time, my involvement in the study and fellowship of several faith traditions has lead me to the Interfaith Partners of SC and, more importantly, your careful, poignant, and admirable attention to the religious community's needs. As a result of your efforts of granting a voice to the often voiceless in contemporary society, not solely in the States but with our neighbors across waters, you have created a space in which the religious and the non-religious alike have the opportunity to coexistence in harmonious security. To you, I (as

well as several others) am eternally grateful. For it is your attention which I offer the most praise as, according to Simone Weil, "attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity" in which one ascends toward God in order to acknowledge the insatiable desire for the Absolute Good that often remains unheard in the spirits of the afflicted and oppressed. These sweet, fluttery ramblings of a school boy are utterances I had intended (or perhaps not so intentionally as they most likely would have fallen out of my mouth in an uncontrollable avalanche) on confessing to you at the IPSC's event for you at the State House. I was saddened to see that you were absent, but I understand the importance of your position. My camera will have to wait for another time to take a picture with you, my eyes will have to wait until meeting with yours, and my heart will have to wait to be softened by your presence. Yet again, I offer you my gratitude. However, with gratitude, sorrow often comes.

It is with both regret and sorrow that I must accept the terms of your soon migration to DC. Do not allow me to be misunderstood, I am not sorrowful because of your position or the administration that you will work under. On the contrary, I do not believe that I could be any more proud of our state and the wonderful human being we are releasing into the world to represent the red, white, and blue. I do not believe that there is anyone more worthy or deserving of the position. It is with sorrow that I realize that we, the citizens of South Carolina, will no longer have the guiding grace and mercy of your leadership directing--no, walking alongside-- our state into the future. You are the prophet your people have needed in times of our own exodus: from the terrorist attack at Emmanuel, the division transpired by the lowering of the Confederate Flag, and the recent hurricane; among others. I am hopeful yet hesitant. Will we rise like the Lion of Judah? Or will we fall like the great city of Lamentations? I do not write these things to strike fear nor trembling into your bones. I write them to assure you that, just as South Carolina walked alongside you as you parted the metaphorical Red Sea, so too will the American people.

In conclusion, I am proud of the Palmetto State, and I am even more so proud of our Governor. Thank you for your service. I look forward to the many blessings the new year presents you.

May peace be upon you and yours,



Joshua Eargle
Bluefish Student Minister
President and Founder of AAIT
Presbyterian College