

# Milton group aims to inform community about Islam

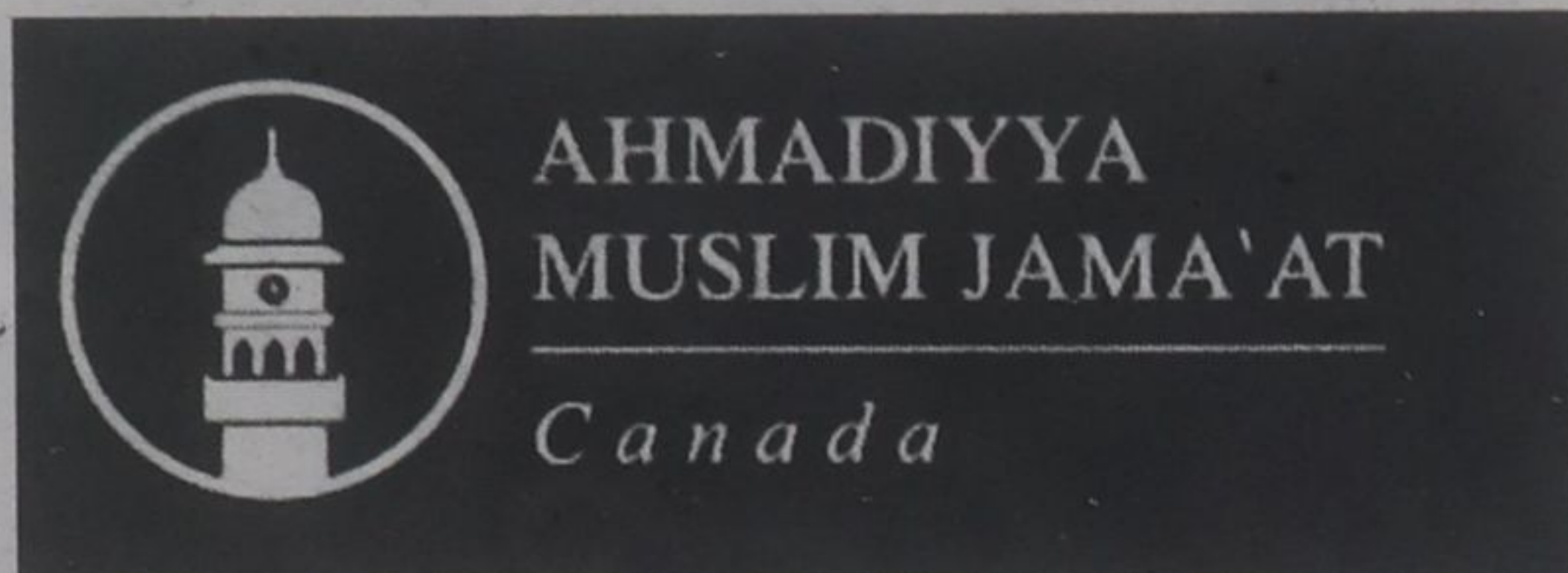
*Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at holds informal Q&A event*

NATHAN HOWES

The path to knowing true Islam begins with understanding.

That was one of the key messages delivered by the Milton Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at congregation at its inaugural bimonthly forum, including a question-and-answer, June 27 at St. Paul's United Church.

Titled, I'm a Muslim- Ask me anything, the goal of the seminar is to break down barriers in the community and inform residents about Islam.



Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at

The congregation reviewed 11 truths about the faith, showcasing videos from an Islam website (<https://trueislam.today/>), and hosted a near 50-minute Q-and-A session with the audience.

Maqbool Sheikh, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at director of advocacy and public relations, MC'd the forum, while Imam Muhammad Afzal Mirza, also with the congregation, was the main

panellist.

"The idea of this whole program was really to reach out to the community and offer an opportunity for fellow Miltonians to come and ask questions on Muslims, as opposed to extremists. There is a lot of misinformation out there in the world," said Sheikh.

"We're hoping it is a safe, friendly environment where (residents) feel comfortable enough to ask any ques-

tions."

Mirza addressed a number of topics and issues, from misinterpretations of the Qur'an to justify terrorism, current political turmoil in the United States and the welcoming and friendly nature of Canadians, among others.

Regarding misinterpreting religious text, Mirza said every faith has experienced a phase where its words have been hijacked and twisted for personal gain or beliefs.

According to the True Islam website, the first truth of Islam is that it wholly rejects all forms of terrorism.

"ISIS is extremist against its own people because it thinks if a Muslim does not cater to its ideology we are (enemies), even though we call ourselves Muslim. Then those who are not Muslims,

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— Maqbool Skeikh, Milton Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Director of Advocacy and Public Relations

are already on the hit list anyway," said Mirza.

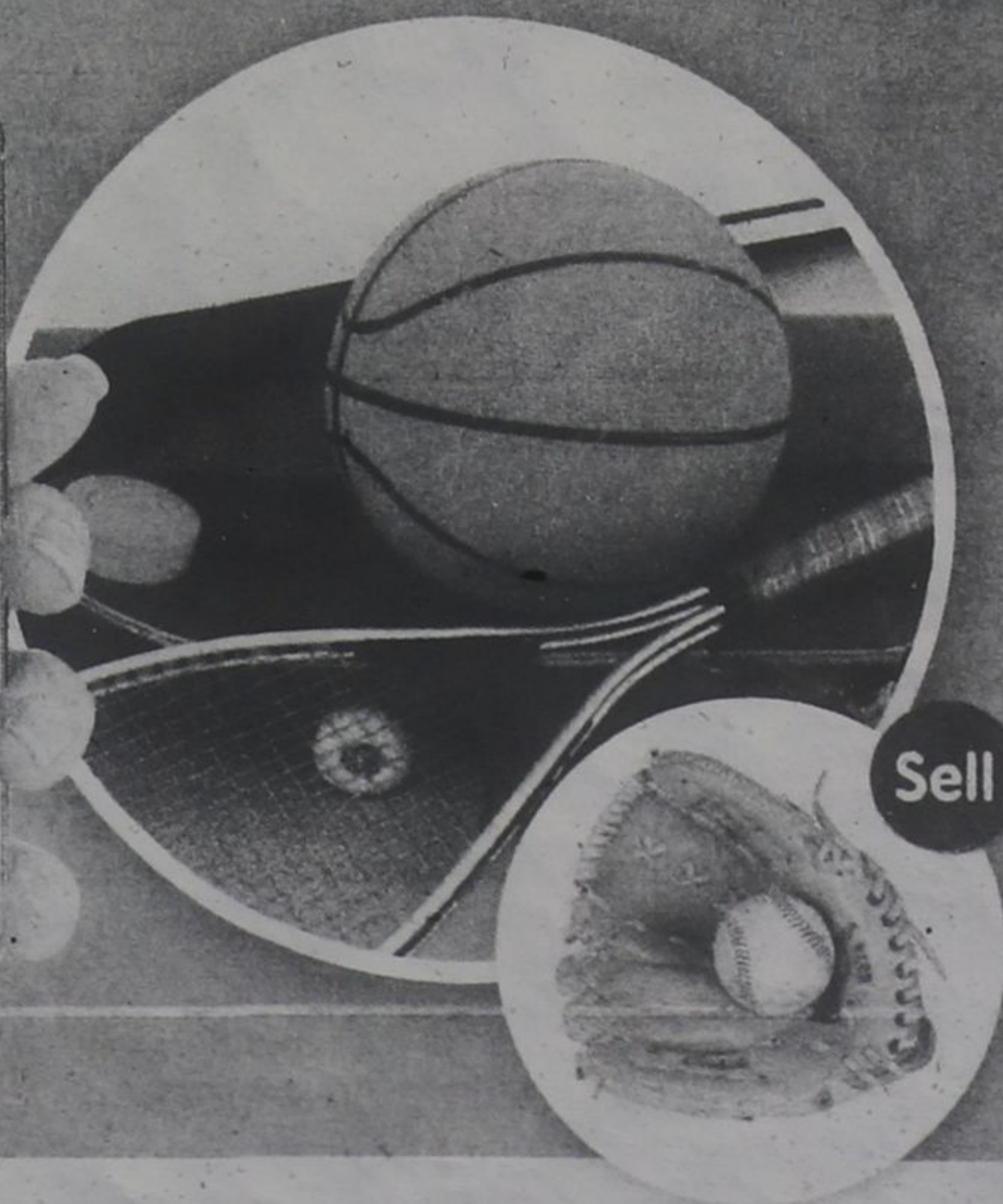
Those who believe in the "true spirit of faith" do not cater to violence because religion begins with human beings, Mirza explained. "Fighting is not the solution to anything. Dialogue, sit-

ting down, listening to each other, taking care of each other and sharing the goodness we have in ourselves is," said Mirza.

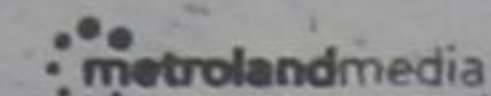
"I believe religion has proven that it delivers much-

● See IMAM, page 35

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In 1936, a fourteen-year-old girl, Mary Stevenson, wrote the classic poem, *Footprints in the Sand*, claiming that God gave her the words while she just pushed the pencil. From that day on, Mary gave hand-written copies of her poem to friends, relatives and strangers.

Although her authorship is disputed in some literary circles, this inspirational narrative has brought a reassuring sense of comfort in deep anguish and private pain. It reminds hurting individuals that there is one who knows our sparrow, who cares, who loves and who will always be there for us.

### FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

*One night, I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.*

*Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.*

*In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.*

*Sometimes there were two sets of footprints.*

*Other times there were one set of footprints.*

*This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life*

*When I was suffering from anguish, sorrow, or defeat,*

*I could see only one set of footprints.*

*So I said to the Lord, "You promised me, Lord,*

*That if I followed you, you would walk with me always.*

*But I noticed that during the most trying periods of my life*

*There have only been one set of prints in the sand.*

*Why, when I have needed you most,*

*You have not been there for me?"*

*The Lord replied, "The times when you have seen*

*only one set of footprints*

*Is when I carried you."*

Submitted by Pastor Dan Rogge of Milton's New Life Church -



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