

## **Imam and Pastor Warm Calgary Hearts in Minus 49 degree Windchill**

The thermometer sat at -30 and the windchill was reported to be -49, but 220 people braved the wintry blast to see *The Imam and the Pastor*, and to talk with the participants about their work.

Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye arrived in Calgary just as the coldest weather in several years settled in for a three-day stay. But the interest in what they have been able to do in Kaduna and the surrounding area brought young and old to the Plaza Theatre in Calgary to view their film and ask them questions—questions about how to work with the person you hate; how to work with people who profess a different faith without compromising your own faith; how to bring healing where killing has taken place.

Drawing from their own experience of finding the challenge to change their hate within their own deeply-held faiths, James and Ashafa challenged people to find the places where they were in agreement, rather than creating conflicts around the places where they don't agree. They told the crowd that a study had been done showing that there were 75 areas where Islam and Christianity were in agreement, and only 25 where there was disagreement.

They also told the questioners that neither of their faiths condoned killing, yet so many who profess these faiths find ways to justify violence. They demonstrated that violence was not necessary and that when people focused on their sense of the leading of the Supreme Being they were able to find ways within their own deeply held faiths to work together for the advancement of all.

The next day they spoke to approximately 30 students at the University of Calgary who are involved in the Peace Studies Program, again answering questions and challenging the young people to build a world where each person is able to live up to his/her deepest convictions without infringing on his/her neighbour.

Initiatives of Change, (working with members of the Muslim Association of Calgary), is very grateful to the Mennonite Central Committee of Alberta and the Calgary Centre for Culture Equity and Diversity for their partnership in this venture, and looks forward to further initiatives where they can work together.