July 9, 2012

Elliot Schrage  
Vice-President of Communications and Public Policy  
Facebook  
1601 S. California Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Erin M. Egan  
Chief Privacy Officer  
Facebook  
1601 S. California Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Dear Mr. Schrage and Ms. Egan:  

We, the undersigned, representing a diverse group of faith-based leaders and organizations, write to inquire about recent news reports that Facebook is developing technology that might permit children under age 13 to access its website¹. We recognize that such an initiative would address the challenging situation of children under 13 accessing Facebook accounts and appreciate Facebook’s concern for this issue.

However, we are very concerned about this possible step by Facebook. Our faith communities include millions of families and our first priority is the safety of their children. As people of faith we deeply value the dignity of each person and believe that children’s privacy should be protected. While we believe that the Internet offers extraordinary potential for children to learn and grow, we believe this can only happen when children’s online privacy and safety have every possible safeguard.

We have many questions about Facebook’s interest in providing access to children age 12 and under. We would like your response to the following questions:

- What privacy controls will be offered? How will Facebook help parents and children understand privacy protections, their implications and how to use them?
- How much information and control will parents have over their children’s activities on Facebook? Will parents be able to monitor everything their children do? Could Facebook give parents the default option of monitoring their children’s accounts?
- Will Facebook offer options such as “Do Not Track” and other technologies that allow users to block the collection of data?

¹ See the June 3, 2012 article in the Wall Street Journal entitled “Facebook Explores Giving Kids Access”
What information will be collected on children under 13 who use Facebook?
Who owns the content created by these minors: Facebook or their parents?
How long will Facebook maintain this data? Our understanding is that the data Facebook collects is never deleted. Is this correct?
What kind of advertising will be allowed and what data will be shared with advertisers?

In a recent statement, Facebook said “We are in continuous dialogue with stakeholders, regulators and other policy makers about how best to help parents keep their kids safe in an evolving online environment.” Is Facebook also open to dialogue with our communities about the concerns we have raised? We request a meeting to discuss our concerns and hear your response to our questions.

We look forward to receiving your reply and continuing the conversation on this most important matter. Please send your reply to Helen Osman, Secretary of Communications, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington DC 20017-1194 or to hosman@usccb.org.

Sincerely

Most Rev. George H. Niederauer
Co-Chairman
Religious Alliance Against Pornography
Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco

Rev. Dr. Jerry R. Kirk
Co-Chairman
Religious Alliance Against Pornography

Rev. Randall Bach
President, Open Bible Churches

Rabbi Jack Bemporad
Director, Center for Interreligious Understanding

Dr. Sterling Brackett
Vice-President/Chief Operating Officer
The Foursquare Church

Mr. Marshall Breger
Professor of Law, Columbus School of Law
Catholic University of America

The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, Jr.
Bishop of Montana

Bishop J. Talmadge Gardner
Executive Director, Discipleship Ministries
International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Dr. A. Elizabeth Grant
Co-Founder and Director of Project Rescue
Assemblies of God

Rev. Dwayne Hastings
V.P. for Press Communications
Southern Baptist Convention

Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Hogan, Sr.
Bishop 1st Jurisdiction Massachusetts
Harvard Divinity School
Bobbie Hunt  
Past President  
National Council of Catholic Women

Bishop James D. Leggett  
(International Pentecostal Holiness Church)  
President, Holmes College

Bishop Paul S. Loverde  
Bishop of Arlington, VA  
The Catholic Diocese of Arlington, VA

Rev. John E. Maracle  
Chief/President  
Native American Fellowship Assemblies of God  
North American Native Christian Council

Bishop George D. McKinney  
St. Stephen's Cathedral Church of God in Christ

Pastor Oscar Mendoza  
Family Life Ministries  
Trinity Church

Rev. Dr. Jesse Miranda  
Director, Center for Hispanic Leadership

Most Rev. Joseph Naumann  
Archbishop  
Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS

Theo Nicolakis  
Chief Information Officer  
Greek Orthodox Diocese

Helen Osman  
Secretary of Communications  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Office of Communication, Inc.  
United Church of Christ

Imam Izak-EL M. Pasha  
Masjid Malcolm Shabazz  
Representing Imam W. Deen Mohammed  
Ministry and The Mosque Cares

Commissioner Kay Rader  
Former World President of Women’s Ministries  
The Salvation Army

Mr. Fred Riley  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Manager Special Projects  
Humanitarian Services

Mr. Rick Schatz  
President/Chief Executive Officer  
pureHOPE

Imam Omar Shaheed  
Muslim American Society  
Masjid As-Salaam  
Chaplain, S.C.

Dr. Woodie J. Stevens  
SDMI – Global Director  
Global Ministries  
International Church of the Nazarene

Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed,  
National Director  
Office for Interfaith & Community Alliances  
Islamic Society of North America

Dr. Thomas Trask  
Former General Superintendent  
General Council of the Assemblies of God

Dr. J. K. Warrick  
General Superintendent  
Church of the Nazarene