

Declaration on Christian Attitudes Towards Muslims

Current statistics describe Western contributions to Christian work among Muslims as less than two percent of total Western mission resources. This uneven distribution appears to be the result of general misconceptions about the Muslim world. These misconceptions are particularly intensified in Western countries due to the Gulf War, hostage crises, and terrorist attacks. Popular imagery within both national media and religious circles can lead to conclusions suggesting Muslims to be “enemies” and “people unable to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Part of this image is caused by Western media attention to pro-Israel issues without due consideration being given to the other side of the same issues.

We are commanded by Scripture to love all people, including Muslims. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are obligated by the Great Commission mandate in Matthew 28 to effectively communicate the Gospel of Christ to all peoples, without exception or criteria.

Regardless of how much effort we have contributed to world mission, we have failed to provide the necessary resources to adequately communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Muslim world. In the future, we will endeavor to assure that our view of the Muslim world demonstrates the same love Jesus Christ displayed for all humanity on the Cross of Calvary.

We who are followers of Jesus Christ, believing that it is our primary responsibility to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all the peoples of the world, confess that:

- 1) We have failed to understand the significance of the many emotional issues of Muslim peoples, especially in regard to the nation of Israel;
- 2) We have allowed our false perceptions and lack of understanding to result in wrong attitudes and a lack of compassion for Muslim peoples and, therefore, have not sought to alleviate suffering among them;
- 3) We are guilty of believing and perpetuating misconceptions, prejudice and, in some instances, hostility and outright hatred toward Muslim peoples;

4) We have not recognized the timing of the Lord when the Holy Spirit has moved on the hearts of Muslims and given these nations a hunger for an understanding of true Christianity. In spite of our attitudes, the Holy Spirit is working among Muslim peoples through Christian witness and direct revelation.

We repent of attitudes of apathy and hostility we have borne toward Muslims. Repentance is a decision that results in a change of mind, which in turn leads to a change of purpose and action. Reconciliation is the goal of our repentance. In an effort toward reconciliation, we pledge to:

- 1) Earnestly pray on a committed basis for the acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by all Muslim peoples;
- 2) Earnestly pray on a committed basis for followers of Jesus Christ to develop attitudes of compassion, love and forgiveness toward Muslims;
- 3) Act within our individual spheres of influence to rebuke sinful attitudes that we encounter within the Christian community;
- 4) Earnestly advocate prayer and relief and development assistance for Muslim peoples, some of whom are the poorest, least educated, least medically provided for, and most victimized by violence;
- 5) Support on a committed basis our brothers and sisters already working in the Muslim world through prayer and financial support; and
- 6) Earnestly pray and seek God’s will to determine our individual role in ensuring that all Muslims have an opportunity to understand and respond to the Good News of Jesus Christ. One clear way is by developing relationships and sharing our faith with Muslims who live in our communities and around the world.

Drafted by the Association of International Missions Services (AIMS) in cooperation with AIMS member agencies focusing on the Islamic world.