

## **Report from the Task Force on Islam and Religious Freedom ACNA Provincial Council, June 2015**

### **Overview**

Christianity and Islam both claim to be revealed and historic faiths. They both claim that God intervened in the lives of individuals to lead them towards God. Both religions claim to hold records of truth and the truth of their faith is held to depend on the accuracy of their books and traditions. However, there are significant divergences between the two faiths. In attempting to know how best to respond to Islam in North America and beyond it is important to understand the differences between the two faiths and confidently declare the Lordship and uniqueness of the Jesus of the New Testament.

### **Challenges - - Multi Faith Dialog**

Theologically conservative Christians, including evangelicals, have traditionally believed that Islamic ideology amounts to a denial of the Biblical teaching on Christ whom Christians confess as the ultimate and unique agent of God's salvation for all. However, many evangelical leaders and missionaries to Muslims are promoting dialog and accommodation with Muslims and with Islam.

There is no doubt that the evangelical leaders involved in multi faith dialog have the best of motives: a great love for Muslims and a desire to see many of them come to Christ. They want to be open with Muslims and sensitive to their feelings, and establish genuine relationships as a context for raising hard questions, such as the persecution of Christians in Muslim lands. They also want to take seriously Christ's injunction to be peacemakers. But many other Christians believe that they may be giving insufficient attention to the nature, history and goals of Islam, and that in seeking to achieve their purpose they may be in danger of diluting basic Christian doctrines.

### **Observations and Concerns**

Christians who seek for common ground with Islam tend to ignore or suppress the real differences between the two faiths. A new "Jesus" is emerging, stripped of uniqueness based on deity, incarnation, passion, crucifixion, resurrection, redemptive mission and universal Lordship, and remarkably similar to Muslim perceptions of 'Isa. The proponents of this new teaching are reducing Christianity to something less than traditional to make it compatible with Islam.

### **Suffering Christians**

Across the Anglican Church in North America, many dioceses and congregations are praying and supporting persecuted and suffering Christians around the world. The Task Force seeks to raise the standard of our suffering Christian brothers and sisters, to call the province to pray for them, to ask the ACNA to be identified with them, to support them, to strengthen them, to be one with them; because as we share in the suffering of Jesus Christ, we share with our suffering brothers and sisters.

## **Matters of Religious Freedom**

Throughout our history, both the United States and Canada have been countries defined by religious faith and freedom. In the United States, religious freedom is a fundamental, God-given right deemed so precious that the Founding Fathers enshrined it in the U.S. Constitution.

Religious liberty is under pressure today. In courtrooms and schoolrooms, offices and shops, public buildings and even churches...those who believe in God are increasingly threatened, punished, and silenced.

The sanctity of life, marriage and family life are being constantly challenged in our societies today.

Awareness, education, and action will become increasingly important and necessary across the ACNA as circumstances continue to challenge religious liberty.

### **Resources**

[www.anglicanaid.net](http://www.anglicanaid.net)  
[www.isaac-publishing.us](http://www.isaac-publishing.us)  
[www.anglicansforlife.org](http://www.anglicansforlife.org)  
[www.theird.org](http://www.theird.org)  
[www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org)  
[www.alliancedefendingfreedom.org](http://www.alliancedefendingfreedom.org)

The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs  
Chairman