

Book of Resolutions 3128. Prejudice Against Muslims and Arabs in the USA

Today in the United States of America there are approximately 3 million persons who are adherents of Islam. Arab Americans, both Christian and Muslim, constitute a growing number of persons in the American population. These persons are suffering the effects of a particularly virulent prejudice too often aided and abetted by statements and images in the media and by rhetoric from some of the highest political leadership. The suffering of this community has increased dramatically since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. As part of the fabric of racism in the USA, in which both subtle and violent acts continue against ethnic groups and persons, such acts are also being perpetrated against the Arab and Muslim communities in the USA. These expressions of racism manifested in violent acts have also increased since September 11, 2001.

Arab American organization offices, mosques, and Islamic centers have been bombed and torched. Leaders of these communities have been murdered and questionable uses of law have been utilized to stifle the rights of association and freedom of expression. Arab persons and/or persons looking like Arabs are being detained in airports and other places without justification. They are continually subjected to harassment and discrimination. Though discriminatory acts against Arabs and Muslims do not stand in isolation from similar acts perpetrated against other racial and ethnic persons in the USA, their existence and effects upon Arabs and Muslims have been little acknowledged in US society, with concomitant deleterious effect on US perceptions, internationally, as they touch upon relations with predominantly Arab and Muslim nations and organizations.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church, in the knowledge that Jesus calls us to the blessings of peacemaking and reminds us that the highest law is to love God and neighbor, calls its members and its leaders:

1. To oppose demagoguery, manipulation, and image making that seeks to label Arabs and Muslims in a negative way;
2. To counter stereotypical and bigoted statements made against Muslims and Islam, Arabs and Arabic culture;
3. To increase knowledge of neighbor by study and personal contact that yield a greater appreciation of the Muslim and Arabic contributions to society;
4. To act decisively to include Arabs and Muslims in interfaith and community organizations;
5. To pray for the perfection of community among us and to participate fully in the process of bringing it into being; and
6. To publicly denounce through statements from the Council of Bishops and the General Board of Church and Society current practices that discriminate against this community.

In order to aid United Methodists to respond to this call, all boards, agencies, and institutions of The United Methodist Church are requested to provide resources and program and, where appropriate, to act in advocacy.

ADOPTED 1988
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2000
Amended and Readopted 2004
readopted 2008
resolution #78, 2004 book of resolutions
resolution #69, 2000 book of resolutions

See Social Principles, ¶ 162B.