



Bridging the Divide 2012 Consultation Report

Finalized July 7, 2012

Over sixty of us gathered as brothers and sisters in Christ to discuss the critical issues before us. At the end of our time together we reached broad consensus on the following:

We gathered for the purpose of "Bridging the Divide" over the differences related to ministry practices in the Muslim world. In an environment of prayer, worship, vigorous discussion and personal relationships we gathered together to listen to each other, to find areas of agreement and explore areas of disagreement.

A significant number of us were brothers and sisters from Muslim backgrounds. Hearing from them was an essential and vital gift in our discussions. We all learned from their interaction with each other how to relate graciously with one another, regardless of our very different personal experiences and convictions.

Among our areas of general agreement:

- Jesus is God incarnate
- The Holy Bible is God's word and our anchor
- The Qur'an is not inspired by God. There is no salvation through Islam. Muhammad is not a prophet sent by God in the biblical sense.
- With care, the Qur'an can be used as a component of witness
- There is diverse expression in practice and experience of Islam
- We acknowledge that Muslims, as all human beings, are created in the image of God and thus reflect certain aspects of the beauty, truth and goodness of God

We learned new categories related to identity that enable us to communicate more clearly with each other and have the potential to move our discussion forward (e.g., core, social, and collective levels of identity). We agreed that the following are critical identity themes *deserving further exploration*:

- 'Coming out': the process of making a clear declaration of the new faith; includes questions of when, how and to whom
- Cultural continuity: traditions and practices from a convert's previous life that can be maintained in the new identity
- Collective identity: how a community of new believers develops shared labels in order to identify with each other at the collective level, in their community, and to the global church
- Next generation: the shared collective identity of new believers as transmitted to the next generation
- Psychological stress from multiple identities
- Ethics, integrity and boundaries: living and speaking truthfully about one's core identity in Christ.

While we still have significant areas of disagreement, we continue to be committed to working through them as sisters and brothers in Christ.