

# Resolution on religious freedom and solidarity with the persecuted church

## World Evangelical Alliance\*

### Abstract

The World Evangelical Alliance General Assembly on 30 October 2008 affirmed human rights and religious freedom, explained its policy and theological rationale on the issue, voiced its concerns and appealed to those in a position to improve the situation. A narrative on the genesis of the resolution and an analysis of its contents can be found in the preceding report.

**Keywords** World Evangelical Alliance, General Assembly, resolution, religious freedom, religious persecution.

1. The members attending the 12th General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) affirm its history of working towards religious freedom for all people. This was one of the motives for the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846. We affirm the advocacy for persecuted Christians and adherents of other faiths towards those in government, exemplified by the first Evangelical Alliance delegations sent to the Turkish Sultan and the Russian Tsar in the 19th century, and as now expressed by the work of Religious Liberty Commission, its Goodwill Ambassador, and its International Institute for Religious Freedom.
2. The activities of the WEA in this regard are founded on Scripture which reveals that every human being is created in the image of God and thus has indelible dignity.
3. The WEA therefore affirms human rights as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the occasion of its 60th anniversary.
4. The WEA affirms religious freedom to exercise any or no religion as defined by the relevant declarations of the United Nations. The right to religious freedom is indivisible and cannot be claimed for one particular group only to the exclusion of others.
5. The WEA therefore aims to work collaboratively with all who share its goals of supporting religious freedom, be it political

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\* [www.worldevangelicals.org](http://www.worldevangelicals.org).

powers or representatives of other or no religions. The WEA affirms the intention of Christians to live together peacefully with adherents of other or no religions and to work together for the common good and reconciliation.

6. The WEA differentiates between advocating the rights of members of other or no religions and the truth of their beliefs. Advocating the freedom of others can be done without accepting the truth of what they believe.
7. The WEA takes seriously the command of Scripture to be on the side of the persecuted. When any part of the body of Christ suffers, we suffer with them, as we consider ourselves to be one part of the Christian community.
8. The WEA notes with great concern the increasing persecution of Christians across the world. We have heard first hand reports at our assembly of Christians being killed and churches being burned in India, of Christian minorities driven out of Iraq and numerous other examples of grave and violent persecution. We weep with our brothers and sisters and pray with and for them, that the Holy Spirit may comfort and strengthen them in their witness. Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray for the persecutors that God may forgive them.
9. The members attending this assembly therefore call upon all churches worldwide to regularly intercede in prayer for the persecuted church, especially in their Sunday services. We also invite them to join us in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church and similar initiatives. We appeal to all churches to deepen and teach a biblical theology of persecution, to practise advocacy on behalf of the persecuted church and to work towards peace among the churches, as well as between Christians and adherents of other or no religions.
10. We appeal to the adherents of other or no religions to join hands with us in the effort to eliminate religious persecution and to restrain those within their communities committing discriminatory and violent acts.
11. We call upon the media to report on religious persecution worldwide. We appeal to them to treat this massive and widespread violation of human rights with the same seriousness as any other

human rights violations. We appeal to the media to beware of being abused for disinformation and defamation of religious minorities.

12. We thank all governments which have protected or improved religious freedom in their own countries or have used their influence to do so in other countries.
13. We call upon the United Nations, other international agencies and national governments to do all within their power to stop such brutal infringements of fundamental human rights in contravention of the International Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments.
14. We especially urge the United Nations and the UN Human Rights Council to stand against any attempt to lower or dilute the right to change one's religion as affirmed in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Resolved by the delegates at the WEA General Assembly at Pattaya, Thailand, on 30th October 2008.