

Proselytism Statement

A Statement on Proselytism, approved by the executive board of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington in 1987, states,

We do support the right of all religions to share their message in the spirit of good will. It is inappropriate, however, for one faith group openly to demean or disparage the philosophies or practices of another faith group as part of its proselytizing. Proselytism which does not respect human freedom is carefully to be avoided....We condemn proselytizing efforts which delegitimize the faith tradition of the person whose conversion is being sought...Deceptive proselytizing efforts are practiced on the most vulnerable of populations—residents of hospitals and old age homes, confused youth, college students away from home. These proselytizing techniques are tantamount to coerced conversions and should be condemned.

The Interfaith Conference (1419 V Street N.W., Washington DC 200099) included, at the time of the signing of the statement, leaders from the Islamic, Jewish, Mormon, Protestant, and Roman Catholic faith communities in the Greater Washington area. It has since expanded membership to include others.

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