

Christian response grows to Muslim plea for global dialogue: "Loving God and Neighbor Together"

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More than 100 U.S. Christian leaders, mainline and evangelical, have endorsed a favorable response to an unprecedented Muslim call for churches to help initiate international dialogue between the two faiths.

Among the endorsers were three megachurch founders: Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*; Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church.

Released in October, the Muslim document, called "A Common Word" and signed by 138 clerics and academics from around the world, declares that "love of the one God and love of neighbor" are core beliefs for both Muslims and Christians and should be the basis for dialogue. Since adherents of the two world religions number more than half the world's population, the Muslim authors say, chances for peace would grow if Muslims and Christians showed together their adherence to those principles.

The Christian response, "Loving God and Neighbor Together," drafted by scholars at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture, which is headed by theologian Miroslav Volf, appeared November 18 as an advertisement in the *New York Times* along with the names of signatories.

The Christian authors said they were "heartened" by the Muslim appeal and concluded: "It is with humility and hope that we receive your generous letter and we commit ourselves to labor together in heart, soul, mind and strength for the objectives you so appropriately propose."

Signers included Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School; Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary; Joseph Hough, president of Union Theological Seminary; Richard Cizik, vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals; John Buchanan editor/publisher of the Century; and David Neff, editor in chief of

Christianity Today.