

# Christian Prof Wearing Muslim Hijab as Part of 'Advent Worship'

A professor at Wheaton College in Illinois will wear the Muslim headscarf, or hijab, as part of her Advent worship, and is asking other women to do the same.

"I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a Christian, are people of the book. And as Pope Francis stated last week, we worship the same God," Larycia Hawkins posted on her Facebook page.

Hawkins is an associate professor of political science, according to the university website. Hawkins' recent research revolves around race, religion and politics.

"But as I tell my students, theoretical solidarity is not solidarity at all. Thus, beginning tonight, my solidarity has become embodied solidarity," she writes.

Hawkins says she gained permission from the Council for American-Islamic Relations for her project, and they "welcomed" the gesture.

Her Christmas "wish" is that other women—no matter their faith—wear the hijab to stand with Muslims.

And many responded: Hawkins' comments are chock-full of photos of other women wearing the sacred veil, as well as many praising Hawkins' stance.

In response to Hawkins' challenge to other women to wear the hijab as well, Wheaton issued the following statement:

*In recent days, Wheaton College students distributed an "An Open Letter to Leaders in the Evangelical Community,"*

expressing their desire for Christians to treat and to speak about our Muslim neighbors in loving and respectful ways. Wheaton College has also received questions and media coverage related to statements some faculty members have made on social media regarding the relationship between Christianity and Islam.

Wheaton College is an institution of distinctively evangelical Christian identity. The core of our faith, as expressed in our Statement of Faith, is our belief that "the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, triumphing over all evil; and that all who believe in Him are justified by His shed blood and forgiven of all their sins." We affirm that salvation is through Christ alone.

Our Community Covenant explores specific obligations of Christian morality, including affirming the call to love our neighbors as ourselves; to uphold the God-given worth of human beings, from conception to death, as the unique image-bearers of God; and to give faithful witness to the Gospel. The Scriptures, as well as the Community Covenant, hold us accountable to reject injustice, prejudice, and the taking of innocent life.

As a Christian liberal arts institution, we value a robust exchange of ideas on the critical issues of the day. Faculty and student expressions of concern about the treatment of Muslims have been grounded in a desire to live peaceably and respectfully with all people, including our neighbors of Islamic and other religious faith traditions. While these commitments are consistent with our Statement of Faith and Community Covenant, overtures of Christian friendship must be enacted with theological clarity as well as compassion.

We celebrate our religious liberty as American citizens under the Constitution, and fervently defend the free exercise of that liberty by those of other faiths in the same way that we

*desire respect of and protection for our own religious liberty.*

*Some recent faculty statements have generated confusion about complex theological matters, and could be interpreted as failing to reflect the distinctively Christian theological identity of Wheaton College. We will be in dialogue with our faculty, staff and students in the days ahead to explore how best to articulate our love for our Muslim neighbors in ways that are consistent with our distinctive theological convictions.*