

THE FRIENDS INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT ON DIVERGENT VIEWS

1. Friends International is an evangelical Mission that works with a cross-section of denominational and independent churches. Furthermore, its trustees, branch officials, staff and volunteers also represent a considerable diversity in their church backgrounds.
2. The Statement of Faith contained in the Trust Deeds represents the essential truths of the Gospel that are basic for the ministry of Friends International. As such, it is the doctrinal base to which all trustees, branch officials, staff and volunteers must assent, and the grounds on which Friends International is in fellowship with churches and other mission societies.
3. Friends International does, however, recognize and respect the divergences of biblical interpretation and practices amongst evangelical Christians, including those of churches overseas to which international student Christians may belong. As long as these differences do not conflict with the Statement of Faith or cause undue divisiveness, they are not a barrier to becoming a staff member, a trustee or a branch official.
4. Being non-denominational in doctrine, Friends International expects its trustees, branch officials, staff and volunteers to be mutually respectful regarding teachings not covered by the Statement of Faith. Such teachings should not prejudice their advice when counselling a new believer regarding church affiliation, nor affect the churches and mission societies with which they have contact.
5. When working in a single church context, whether one's own or another, Friends International expects its trustees, branch officials, staff and volunteers to operate with respect towards that particular church's viewpoints on matters not covered by the Statement of Faith. However when working within an inter-church context, trustees, branch officials, staff and volunteers are able to make decisions, where needed, on matters not covered by the Statement of Faith and where discretion is permitted by Scripture. Whether applying their own viewpoints or deferring to the viewpoints of others, their practice should be motivated by a desire for the optimal cooperation of the group and not by a sense of loyalty to their own theological convictions.
6. Friends International believes that God has called the trustees and staff to concentrate unswervingly on evangelism, discipleship and preparing students to help in the development of churches in their own countries upon their return, according to Christ's mandate (Matthew 28 v18-20). Therefore, all are urged to concentrate on these goals and to exercise care in all conversation and correspondence so that no offence is unnecessarily caused to anyone, be they colleagues, local churches or students on any matters, whether doctrinal, political or racial. Whilst the cross may be an offence to some (Galatians 5.11), we are called to be the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2.15).

I agree with the Friends International Statement on Divergent Views

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PRINT NAME _____