

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

**Issued by Ingrid Mattson, PhD, President  
The Islamic Society of North America  
Plainfield, Indiana**

**Re: Statements made by ISNA Canada Secretary General regarding Laleh Bakhtiar's Qur'an Translation**

**October 24, 2007**

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) has asked ISNA Canada Secretary General to retract his statement that he would consider "banning" Laleh Bakhtiar's translation of the meaning of the Qur'an and his questioning of Bakhtiar's authority to undertake such a translation.

ISNA is an umbrella organization that strives to represent the diversity of North American Islam. ISNA has long recognized the validity of different schools of Islamic thought, theology and doctrine. We have affirmed this recognition as an original signatory of the "Amman Message" (<http://ammanmessage.com/>) and by offering the platform of our conferences and conventions open to representatives of our diverse community. We do not recognize any particular scholar, school of thought or institution as necessarily authoritative for all Muslims. Further, we support the right of scholarly inquiry and intellectual discussion on issues related to Islam.

ISNA supports and encourages honest debate and scholarship on issues affecting the Muslim community. In particular, we have long been concerned with the misuse of Islam to justify injustice towards women. ISNA held its first domestic violence conference over ten years ago, and has since that time, has held numerous training and education seminars to promote domestic harmony and prevent violence against women.

It should be noted, in fact, that Bakhtiar's interpretation of Qur'anic verse 4:34 is not new, although we do not deny that she arrived at her position independently. A similar interpretation was offered by Dr Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, Rector of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, in a 2003 special edition of "Islamic Horizons," ISNA's flagship publication. It is unfortunate that many Muslims are unaware of the depth and sophistication of Qur'anic exegesis. ISNA is committed to rectifying this lack of knowledge and expects our administrators to promote ISNA's values and mission.