

## **The Atlanta Interfaith Manifesto**

### *A Brief History*

The *Atlanta Interfaith Manifesto* (AIM) is a document resulting from the efforts of more than thirty Atlantans to promote interfaith cooperation and to denounce religious bigotry. Endorsed by 75 of Atlanta's religious, civic and business leaders, the AIM was published in the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* and in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in September of 2016. These actions emerged, not from a formal organization, but from a group of individuals speaking out on behalf of their cherished beliefs.

Conversations about promoting greater interfaith cooperation began within a small group of people in late 2014, resulting in the convening of a lunch meeting of 32 guests in January of 2015. The deliberations of this religiously diverse group led to the formation of a Steering Committee and to the eventual drafting, refining, and publishing of the AIM.

The word "manifesto" was inspired by the *Ministers' Manifesto of 1957*, a statement endorsed by 80 white Atlanta ministers denouncing racial segregation and published in the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Atlanta Journal* (and subsequently in the *New York Times*). Though neither bold nor strident by today's standards, this *Manifesto* followed *Brown vs. the Board of Education* by a mere three years. As such, it constituted a courageous, if not daring, stand on behalf of human rights.

With funding from the Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation, an AIM website ([www.atlantainterfaithmanifesto.org](http://www.atlantainterfaithmanifesto.org)) was developed, and social media efforts are now being utilized to disseminate items of interest concerning interfaith cooperation. There are well over a dozen interfaith-related organizations in the Atlanta area, some that have been at work since the 1990s. The individuals involved with the AIM hope that they can function as a catalyst, not only promoting interfaith cooperation directly, but also nurturing the work of numerous local organizations whose work is now more vital than ever.