



Claremont Main Road Mosque (CMRM)

Vision, Mission & Practices



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ABOUT US

The Claremont Main Road Mosque was established in 1854 and is the sixth oldest mosque in South Africa. It was the second mosque to be built outside the Bo-Kaap. It was administered for over 100 years by the Abderoef family, descendants of Tuan Guru. The first mosque Board in 1978 adopted the mosque constitution and established a system of democratic governance. Under the leadership of Imam Gassan Solomon the mosque played a prominent role in the anti-apartheid struggle during the 1980s. This legacy continues to define the role of CMRM as socially responsive in the post-apartheid period.

Imam Rashied Omar has been the co-ordinating Imam of CMRM since 1986, and is assisted by Imam Shaheed Gamieldien.

CMRM 2014 BOARD MEMBERS

Yusuf Abrahams (Chairperson); Achmat Peters (V-C); Wasiela Agherdien (Treasurer); Jaamia Galant (Secretary); Rashied Omar (Imam); Mariam Baderoon; Khadeeja Bassier; Jeff Jawitz; Mujahid Osman; Suliman Noor.

CMRM VISION

The Claremont Main Road Mosque (CMRM) espouses a comprehensive vision of Islam (*shumuliyat al-Islam*) that embraces the intellectualism of the theologians (*mutakallimun*), the juristic pragmatism of the jurists (*fuqaha* and *usuliyyun*) as well as spiritual inspiration of the mystics (*ahl-al-tassuwuf*). It is a dynamic and socially responsive vision of Islam that was forged in the crucible of the struggle for creating a more humane and caring South African society. It is a vision of Islam that was first formulated by Imam `Abdullah Haron in collaboration with the Claremont Muslim Youth Association and articulated in their newsletter “*The Islamic Mirror*” in the late fifties and throughout the sixties. We at the Claremont Main Road Mosque have sought to nurture and expand this vision of Islam.

CMRM MISSION

The Claremont Main Road Mosque (CMRM) has an established reputation of critically reflecting on and engaging with issues that affect us as Muslim citizens, locally and globally. Many people have been drawn to this mosque over the years because of its strong commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle and its compassionate vision of Islam. Our mission is to build an institutional legacy for future generations, of bearing witness to Islam that upholds the virtues of social justice and compassion. CMRM’s mission includes five key dimensions:

1. *Jihad Against Poverty*
2. *Gender Justice*
3. *Interfaith Solidarity*
4. *Youth Empowerment*
5. *Environmental Justice*

1. JIHAD AGAINST POVERTY

CMRM advocates the view that poverty alleviation is not the sole responsibility of economists or public officials, but rather it is an integral part of what it means to be an engaged Muslim. From an Islamic perspective, we believe that poverty is not limited to a lack of food or drink. Poverty encompasses the lack of all basic human needs, such as clean water, nutrition, sanitation, health care, education, clothing and shelter. Our *Jihad Against Poverty* mission is to engage in and build sustainable social justice programmes through involvement in some of the following activities:

- Literacy projects
- Sanitation campaigns in informal settlements
- Social justice campaigns for impoverished and marginalised communities
- Food and blanket distributions to needy communities
- Twinning relationships with township mosque communities
- Supporting NGOs who campaign for social justice causes

2. GENDER JUSTICE

CMRM is committed to the struggle for the equivalence and full dignity of women within our comprehensive vision of Islam. With respect to this dimension of our mission we support the struggle of women for full dignity and honour in our country, our homes and most importantly our masjid. Accommodating women for prayers on the main floor of the mosque is but one small step in this endeavor. CMRM is committed to the struggle for gender justice by encouraging and supporting:

- Women in leadership roles in the administration of the mosque
- Women delivering talks and pre-*khutbah* lectures
- NGO's working with abused and destitute women and children

3. INTERFAITH SOLIDARITY

CMRM embraces the enduring values of pluralism and co-existence and regards human diversity not as incidental and negative but rather as representing a God-willed, basic factor of human existence. Through our commitment to interfaith solidarity, CMRM seeks to celebrate human diversity through recognition and affirmation of each other through intimate knowledge (*ta'aruf*), and not mere toleration. CMRM endeavours to forge interfaith solidarity by:

- Inviting guest speakers from other faith communities
- Welcoming visitors from other faith communities to the mosque
- Supporting and participating in activities of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative (CTII)
- Supporting and participating in activities of the Western Cape Religious Leader's Forum (WCRLF)

4. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

CMRM recognises the valuable role youth play in our society and the potential they have in shaping the future. Young people are uniquely placed to open up our eyes to the signs of the times, for they truly live at the cold face of the real and rapidly changing world. Youth also face many challenges on the road to adulthood, and it is our responsibility to provide them with the necessary empathy, support and guidance. To this end, CMRM commits to provide amongst others, the following enabling platforms for youth development and empowerment:

- Leading prayers and *dhikrs*
- Delivering talks and sermons (*khutbahs*)
- Participating in youth camps and forums

5. *ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE*

CMRM is a registered eco-congregation i.e. a faith community committed to working towards a more sustainable world. CMRM advocates the view that environmental justice is intrinsic to being a conscientious Muslim. From an Islamic perspective, the current environmental crisis can be viewed as a symptom of a deeper spiritual malaise. The latter has come about through consumerist lifestyles which has disturbed the balance between humans and nature. To this end, CMRM commits to:

- Taking responsibility for preserving the natural environment
- Implementing measures which will reduce the mosque's carbon footprint
- Encouraging congregants to embrace ecologically ethical lifestyles
- Supporting NGOs that raise awareness campaigns around environmental justice

CMRM PRACTICES

The practices at CMRM best define us as **critical traditionalists**. This means that we embrace sound customary practices, in line with our vision and mission, but we do not follow these practices rigidly or dogmatically. We embrace all the traditional Muslim schools of law (*madhahib*), but do not adhere strictly to any one *madhab*. We aspire to follow the prophetic traditions (*sunnah* and *hadith*), but also embrace what we consider to be ‘good innovations’ (*bid`a hasana*). In this regard we support the view of the noted jurist and legal theorist, Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d.1388), who argued that Islam does not *a priori* condemn innovation in and of itself. An innovation should always be appraised in terms of whether it complements the teachings of Islam, classified as a good innovation (*bid`a hasana*) or whether it violates the teachings of Islam, classified as a misguided innovation (*bid`a sayyi`a*).

The following are some of our common practices:

- We deliver the sermon (*khutbah*) in Arabic and English from the pulpit (*mimbar*)
- We accommodate women in a designated space in the main prayer area of the mosque and women are regularly invited to deliver talks
- We perform 8 *rak-ats* for *tarawih* prayers during Ramadan
- During Ramadan, we perform *witr* according to both the *Shafi`i* and *Hanafi* schools of law (*madhabs*)
- We advocate astronomical calculations for determining the Islamic lunar calendar
- We celebrate *wuquf* and *‘Id al-Adha* in unison with pilgrims (*hujjaj*) in Makkah
- We have *dhikr* sessions led by a range of *jamats* and *tariqahs*
- People of other faiths are regularly invited as guest speakers and are always welcome
- We welcome critical debate on contentious issues and advocate an ethics of disagreement (*adab al-ikhtilaf*) that respects the views of others even though they may differ from our own.



CMRM is an independent mosque that seeks to network with other mosques and faith-based organisations locally and abroad. We are not affiliated to any groups.

ALL ARE WELCOME AT CMRM