

Religious and Belief Systems in Australia post-1945

Fr Brian Vale and Fr Patrick McInerney

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE



NEALS

Outline of Workshop

- Introduction
- Studies of Religion HSC Focus
- What is interreligious/interfaith dialogue?
- Attitudes needed for interfaith dialogue
- Why is interreligious dialogue necessary in Australia today?
- *The Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations*
- Examples of interreligious dialogue:
 - Lindt Café Siege, December 2014
 - *Iftar* meals
 - *Faith Ecology Network* (FEN) Multi-faith Prayer Vigil, August 2013
 - *Abraham Conference*, August 2015
 - *Youth PoWR*, September 2015
 -
- Resources for Interreligious Dialogue
- Conclusion

Fr Brian Vale

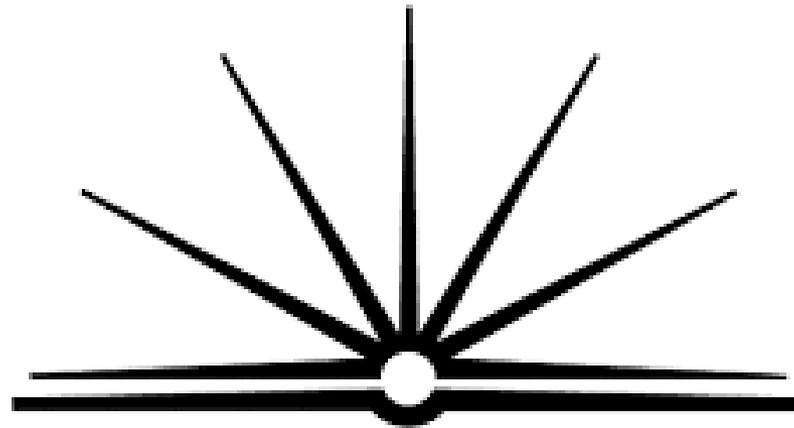
Fr Patrick McInerney



Pope Francis & Interreligious Dialogue



STUDIES OF RELIGION HSC



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
N E W S O U T H W A L E S

Religious traditions in Australia post-1945

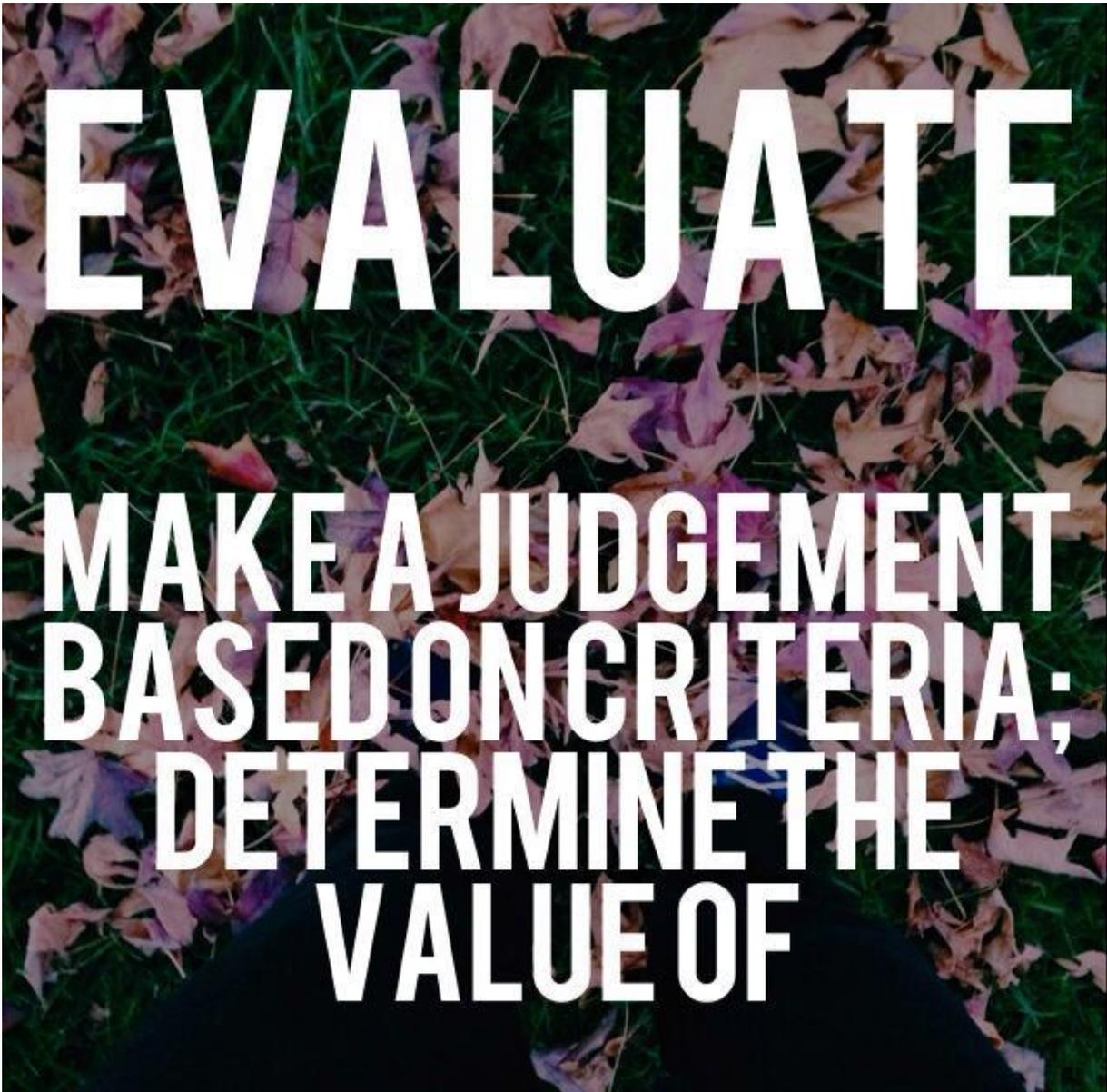
Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities

Religious Expression in Australia 1945 to the present

- **The religious landscape from 1945 to present in relation to:**
 - changing patterns of religious adherence
 - the current religious landscape
- **Religious dialogue in multi-faith Australia**
 - Ecumenical movements within Christianity
 - **Interfaith dialogue**
 - The relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of reconciliation.



EVALUATE THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN MULTI-FAITH AUSTRALIA



EVALUATE

**MAKE A JUDGEMENT
BASED ON CRITERIA;
DETERMINE THE
VALUE OF**

2011 Studies of Religion II HSC Exam
Section 1, Question 11

Explain the role of the
ecumenical movement
and/or interfaith
dialogue as religious
responses to
secularism.

Include examples in
your answer.



What is Interreligious Dialogue?



Dialogue is not

- **Debate**

- Winners & losers
- Superior/inferior

- **Seeking converts**

- Win over the other
- Respect freedom

- **Comparative studies in religion**

- “head trip”
- Encounter between persons

Dialogue is not

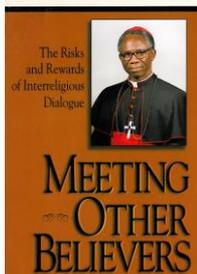
■ Ecumenism

- **Ecumenism** refers to the movement towards religious *unity* amongst Christian denominations e.g. Catholic, Anglican, Uniting, Pentecostal
- **Interfaith dialogue** is a process that seeks to achieve respect and mutual *understanding* and *cooperation* between people of different religions e.g. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Baha'i, Sikhism

Dialogue is

Interreligious dialogue is a meeting of people of differing religions, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, in order to listen to the other, to try to understand that person's religion, and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration. It is hoped that the other partner will reciprocate, because dialogue should be marked by a two-way and not a one-way movement. Reciprocity is in the nature of dialogue. There is give and take. Dialogue implies both receptivity and active communication.

CARDINAL FRANCIS ARINZE

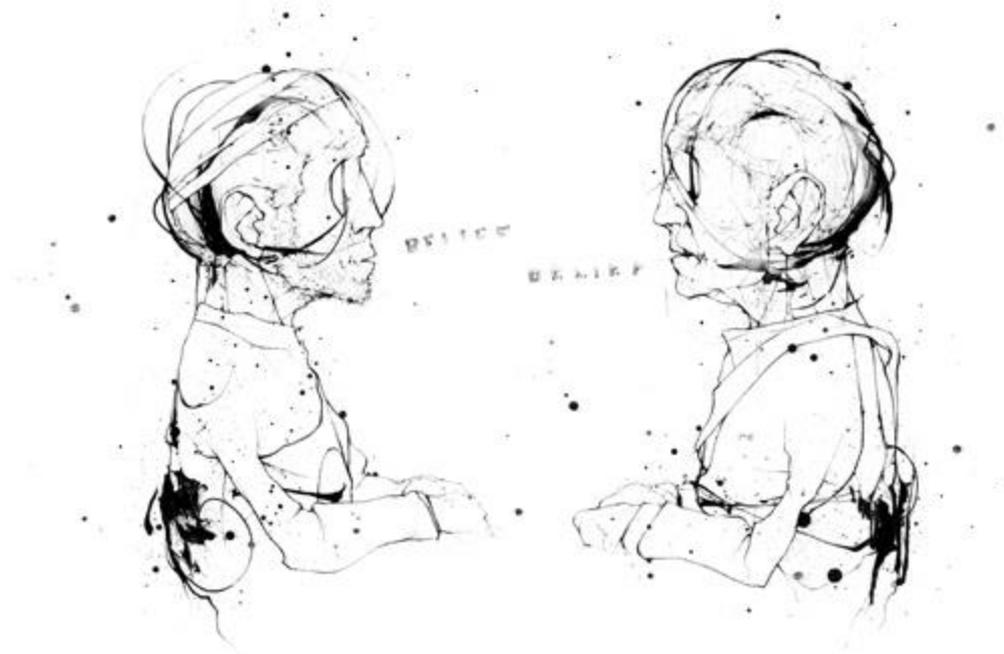


Cardinal Francis Arinze, *Meeting Other Believers: The Risks and Rewards of Interreligious Dialogue* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing – Fowler Wright Books, 1997), 5.

Four Kinds of Interfaith Dialogue

1. The dialogue of life
2. The dialogue of action
3. The dialogue of theological discourse
4. The dialogue of religious experience

Attitudes needed for Interreligious Dialogue



Attitudes for interfaith dialogue

“Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is **holy**. Else we may find ourselves treading on another’s dream. More serious still, we may forget ... that God was there before our arrival.”

Max Warren



Attitudes for interfaith dialogue

- “The purpose of dialogue is to come to an understanding of the other, not to determine whether they are good, bad, right or wrong.” (Kay Lindahl, *Nine Guidelines for Listening to Others*).
- “Before speaking, we must take great care to listen not only to what people say, but more especially to what they have it in their hearts to say. Only then will we understand them and respect them...” (Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*).
- “The fundamental attitudes that need to be found for dialogue are respect, openness, listening, humility and the common search for truth.” (Larry Nemer SVD, *Prophetic Dialogue: A New Way of Doing Mission?*).



Nine Guidelines for Listening in IRD

1. When you are listening, **suspend assumptions**. We often assume that others have had the same experiences that we have, and that is how we listen to them. Learn to recognize assumptions by noticing when you get upset or annoyed by something someone else is saying.
2. When you are speaking, **express your personal response** – informed by your tradition, beliefs and practices as you have interpreted them in your life. Use “I” language. Take ownership of what you say. Notice how often the phrases “We all”, “of course”, “everyone says”, “you know” come into your conversation. The only person you can truly speak for is yourself.
3. **Listen and speak without judgment** – the purpose of dialogue is to come to an understanding of the other, not to determine whether they are good, bad, right or wrong.

THE SACRED ART OF LISTENING:

Forty Reflections for Cultivating a Spiritual Practice by Kay Lindahl

Nine Guidelines for Listening in IRD

4. **Suspend status** – everyone is an equal partner in the inquiry. There is no seniority or hierarchy. All are colleagues with a mutual quest for insight and clarity. You are each an expert in your life. That is what you bring to the dialogue process.
5. **Honour confidentiality** – leave the names of participants in the room so if you share stories or ideas, no one's identity will be revealed. Create a safe space for self-expression.
6. **Listen for understanding**, not to agree with or believe – you do not have to agree with or believe anything that is said. Your job is to listen for understanding.

THE SACRED ART OF LISTENING:

Forty Reflections for Cultivating a Spiritual Practice by Kay Lindahl

Nine Guidelines for Listening in IRD

7. **Ask clarifying or open-ended questions** to assist your understanding and to explore assumptions.
8. **Honour silence and time for reflection** – notice what wants to be said rather than what you want to say.
9. **One person speaks at a time** – pay attention to the flow of the conversation. Notice what patterns emerge from the group. Make sure that each person has an opportunity to speak, while knowing that no one is required to speak.

THE SACRED ART OF LISTENING:

Forty Reflections for Cultivating a Spiritual Practice by Kay Lindahl

Why is Interreligious Dialogue Necessary in Australia Today?



Australia's religious, cultural and ethnic diversity is constantly increasing. Affiliation to non-Christian religions has dramatically increased in a short period of time.

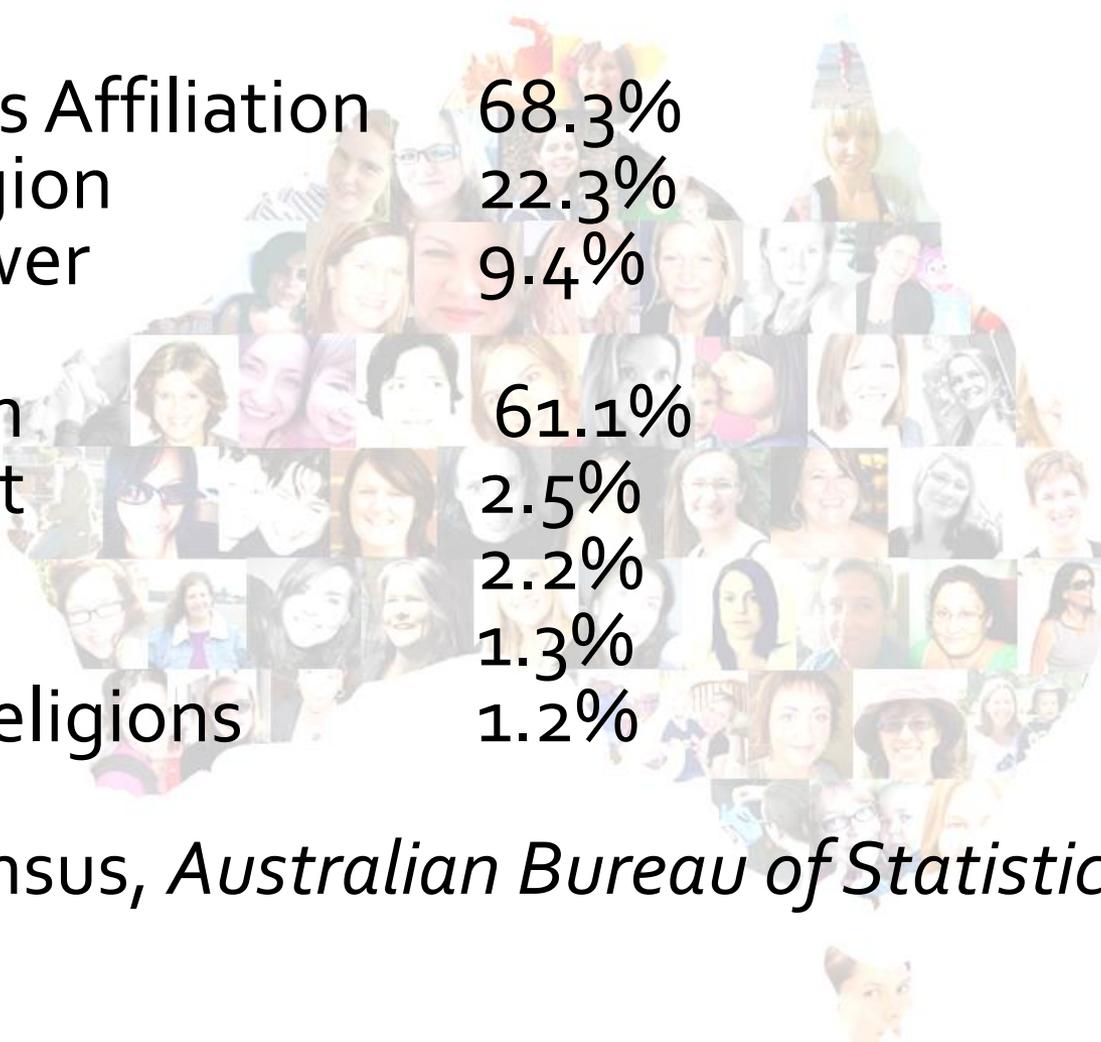


1911 – 96% of Australians reported an affiliation with Christianity.



2011 – 61% of Australians reported an affiliation with Christianity.

A multi-religious society with a secular form of government



Religious Affiliation	68.3%
No Religion	22.3%
No Answer	9.4%

Christian	61.1%
Buddhist	2.5%
Muslim	2.2%
Hindu	1.3%
Other Religions	1.2%

2013 Census, *Australian Bureau of Statistics*



Media Stereotypes

Wars, terrorist attacks and religious conflicts contribute to fear and hatred towards members of certain religions. Australia's Muslim community, for example, was subject to suspicion and persecution in the years following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

During these years, incorrect statements about Islam were disseminated through the media and offensive stereotypes were perpetuated.

Interfaith dialogue provides a forum for these stereotypes to be broken down.

Social Harmony

Interfaith dialogue is a necessary step towards peace within our communities as it fosters respect and mutual understanding.



The Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

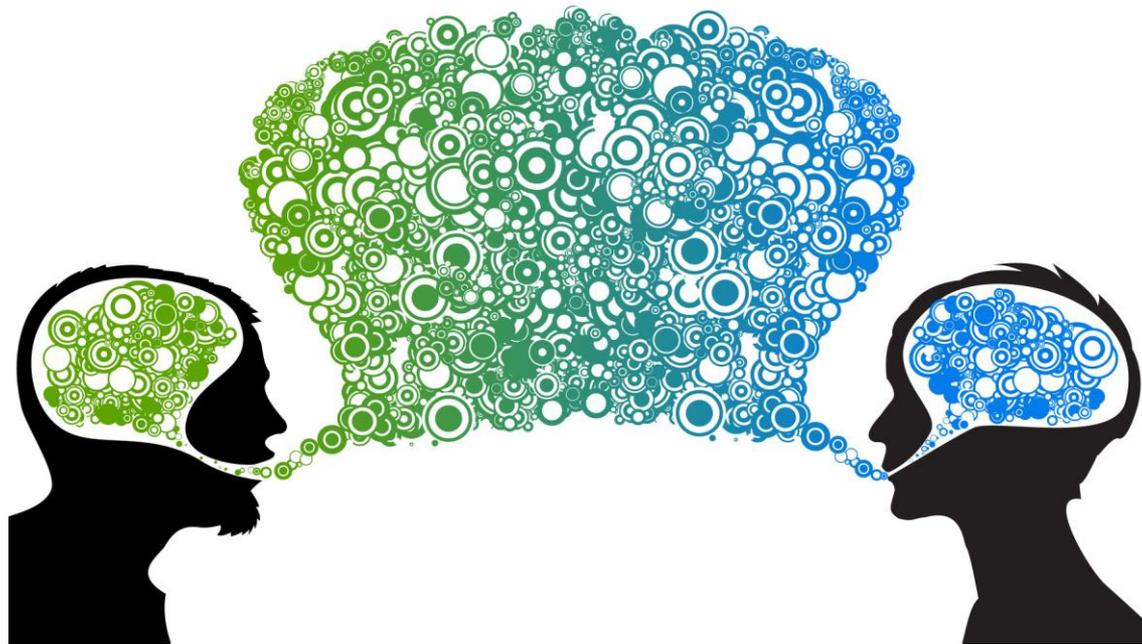


The *Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations* is one of three centres at the *Columban Mission Institute* in North Sydney.

We promote better relations between Christians and Muslims through a number of activities:

- Organizing conferences and seminars to enable Christians and Muslims to meet each other and learn from one another.
- Attending Muslim events e.g. *iftar*, *'Eid*, conferences
- Attending and hosting Christian-Muslim and other interfaith/multi-faith events e.g. *Abraham Conference*
- Publishing *Bridges* – a quarterly newsletter with news and feature articles on interfaith dialogue.
- Providing speakers and conducting workshops on interfaith dialogue.
- Providing resources on Islam and interfaith dialogue.
- Publishing *The Golden Rule Poster*
- Teaching courses on Islam and Interreligious Dialogue

Examples of Interreligious Dialogue



Lakemba

Martin Place

December 2014



Iftar Meals



FEN Multi-faith Prayer Vigil, August 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oIBRoZG1po>



Abraham Conference 2015



ABRAHAM CONFERENCE 2016

HATE SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

**Keynote Speaker - Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton,
Chief Minister, The Great Synagogue**

Plus panel comprising Muslim, Christian & Jewish representatives

Venue: Parramatta Mission Fellowship Hall
Uniting Church in Australia
119 Macquarie Street,
Parramatta NSW 2150

Date: Sunday, 21 August 2016

Time: 2.30pm - 6.00pm

Cost: \$20 Adult
\$10 Student/Pensioner

Register online bit.ly/abrahamconf2016 by Thursday 11 August
(payment can be made online or at the door)

Enquiries: abrahamconf2016@gmail.com



#AbrahamPanelSydney

Event: Abraham Conference



Abraham Conference 2016



Youth PoWR



YOUTH
POWR

<https://goo.gl/3RWaVk>



<https://www.facebook.com/Youth.PoWR/>



YOUTH PoWR

3 SEPTEMBER 2016



YOUTH PoWR
PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

*TOWARDS A MORE COMPASSIONATE
AND JUST SOCIETY*

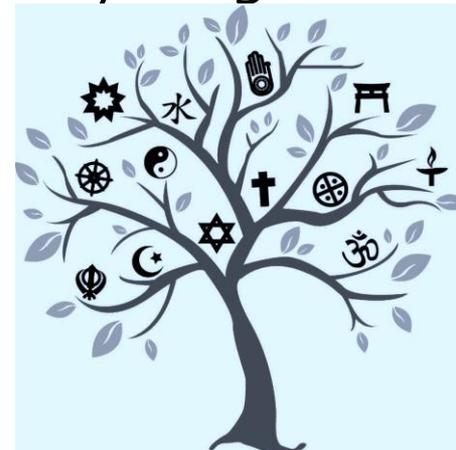
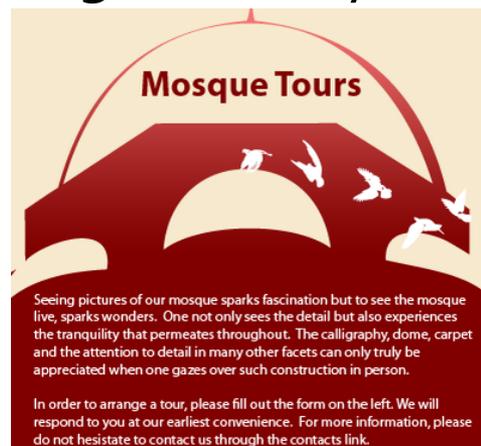


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GROUP ACTIVITY!!

In groups of three or four, devise a hypothetical interfaith event that brings together members of two or more religions.

- What would your interfaith event involve? A mini-bus tour of sacred religious sites? Time spent volunteering in a soup kitchen? A high tea?
- What would you hope to achieve through this event?
- What message would you want your guests to leave with?

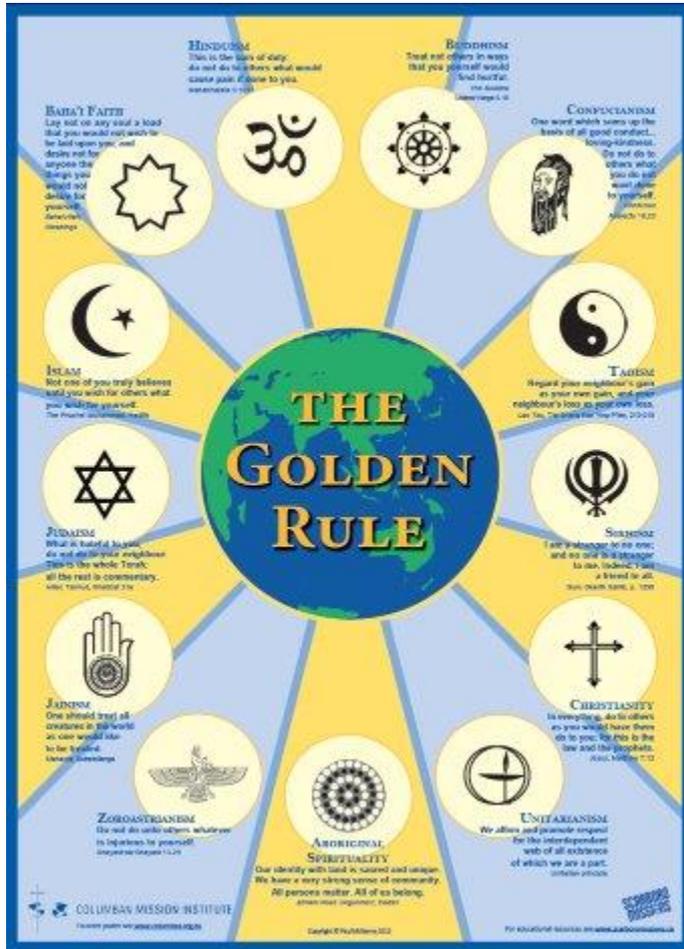


The Golden Rule

- It is not until we meet a follower of another religion and take the time to listen to their views that we realize that all religions are fundamentally good.
- The Qur'an, the Bible and the Torah, for example, all teach the importance of The Golden Rule, that is, treating others as you would like to be treated.
- When our knowledge of other religions is based only on what we see in the media, this is a sure path to fear and conflict within our own communities.

Do unto others
as you would have them
do unto you.

The Golden Rule Poster



- Ethic of reciprocity
- In the sacred texts of thirteen (13) different religions/spiritualities
- Shared/common value
- Authoritative

<https://goo.gl/oZSOza>



www.columbanird.org



What is Interreligious Dialogue

Interreligious dialogue is a meeting of people of differing religions, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, in order to listen to the other, to try to understand that person's religion, and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration. It is hoped that the other partner will reciprocate, because dialogue should be marked by a two-way and not a one-way movement. Reciprocity is in the nature of dialogue. There is give and take. Dialogue implies both receptivity and active communication.

Cardinal Francis Arinze, *Meeting Other Believers* (1997), 5.

[More About Interreligious Dialogue](#)

[More About the Columbans](#)

Latest News



Vatican Message to Muslims for Ramadan and Eid

Beneficiaries and Instruments of Divine Mercy

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has today published its 2016 Eid Message titled: Christians and Muslims: Beneficiaries and Instruments of Divine Mercy.

[Read More](#)



Jornada Mundial de Oración por el Planeta Peru

Con gran alegría recibimos el llamado de Francisco para unimos a la Comunidad Ortodoxa y celebrar un día de oración por el cuidado de nuestra Casa Común.

[Read More](#)

Teaching Documents



Teaching documents on interreligious dialogue from:

- + Roman Catholic Church
- + World Council of Churches
- + Other Christian Churches
- + Other Religions
- + Civil Society

Social Issues



All religions promote truth, peace, justice, mutual respect and care for the earth. We can achieve these shared values more effectively when we work together.

- + Justice
- + Peace
- + Integrity of Creation

World Religions



Basic information on the world's religions - founders, beliefs, texts, teaching, practices and prayer:

- + General Introductions
- + Buddhism
- + Hinduism
- + Islam
- + Judaism

How?

Practical steps in interreligious dialogue. How to go about it, tips we learned along the way.

Resources

Resource materials for promoting, preparing and practicing interreligious dialogue.

- What is Interreligious Dialogue?
- News from the world
- Columban stories
- Teaching documents
- Social Issues
 - Justice
 - Peace
 - Integrity of Creation
- How
- Resources
- World Religions
 - Buddhism
 - Hinduism
 - Islam
 - Judaism

Nostra Aetate – 50th Anniversary



■ Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

- Introduction
- History
- Summary
- Definition
- Implementation
- Teaching Documents
- Our Responsibility
- What we do
- What you can do
- Conclusion

goo.gl/dBWWoT

Bridges – quarterly newsletter of the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations



bridges
Building relationships between Christians and Muslims

Number: 71 June 2016

Editorial

In the past month Nadiya Hussain baked the Queen's 90th birthday cake, Malia Bouattia was elected president of the National Union of Students (NUS), Riyad Mahrez was named the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Men's Players' Player of the Year, Sadiq Khan was elected Mayor of London, Waleed Aly won the Gold Logie and Susana Jamaladinova won Eurovision. These winners all happened to be Muslim, so there has been joyful celebration among Muslims.

Such celebration is good and appropriate. It is acknowledging genuine achievement, a Muslim being rightly honoured in a society that wrongly is often Islamophobic. But this celebration can have a shadow side. It can celebrate an "us" over against an unspoken "them". It can all too easily slip into a form of religious tribalism, of segregated identity rather than integrated belonging, of an invented Muslim identity, especially when baking a cake, leading a student organisation, kicking a football, heading a council, being a popular TV personality or singing well has nothing to do with being a Muslim as such!

I am reminded of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State." It is the tragedy of Pakistan that the founder's wise words have not been heeded and religion has become the business of the State with divisive consequences for all Pakistanis, especially the minority communities. If we allow baking, union activity, sport, government, television and entertainment to be segregated on the basis of religion, we are sowing division in our multicultural, multi-religious society and will reap conflict and violence.

It's Easy to Hate

“ It is easy to hate. They want us to hate. But the terrorist have lost. You know how I know?

Because right now thousands of Lahori men and women are queueing up outside hospitals to donate blood. Tonight, Muslim blood will flow through Christian bodies. And vice versa. You see, in hurting us, you united us. Thank you.
#LahoreStrong

*This text was posted on Facebook on 28 March, the day after the Easter bombing in Lahore. It has since been like daver a thousand times and shared 4,438 times: A resounding defeat for violence and terrorism; a clear victory for peace, dialogue and Christian-Muslim relationships.
Image: Church Mission Society Facebook Page*

In his Gold Logie acceptance speech Waleed Aly told of an Australian actor named Mustafa who used an alias because he could not get a job in the industry using his real name. This powerful story exposes the prejudice, racism and Islamophobia of mainstream society, which generates the counter assertion of a false, segregated Muslim identity in cooking, sport, television and politics (whereas authentic Muslim identity is found in following Quranic and Islamic teaching and observing the Five Pillars). The result is a society divided into "us" and "them".

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- Editorial
- News from the Centre
- News from the world
- Feature articles
- Coming events

<https://goo.gl/cRdaCi>

References

- Dupuche, J. (2013). 'Silence and Dialogue' in *The Journal of The Council of Christians and Jews*, vol. 4 no. 4, pp. 52-54.
- Pope Paul VI. *Ecclesiam Suam: Paths of the Church*. 6 August 1964.
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- Nemer, Lawrence (2007). 'Prophetic Dialogue: A New Way of Doing Mission?' in *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies*, 36. pp. 30-36.