



TRIANGLES

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The Interfaith Experience

Growing recognition of the oneness of the human family has given rise to a common hope: that peoples from different backgrounds will work together to resolve the many problems facing humanity.

We might reasonably expect religion to be leading the way in this, for religion is based on the vision of the spiritual nature of the human being. All religious teachings affirm the moral responsibility to demonstrate qualities of love, compassion and discrimination. And in today's interdependent world religious leaders increasingly speak of the need to give these qualities expression on a universal scale. The factions in different faiths that fiercely resist efforts to become more inclusive tend to attract the publicity. Yet of far more significance for the future is that growing movement amongst believers of all faiths to explore and enhance the points of unity between the religions.

At local, as well as at national and international levels, believers from different religions now come together in a multitude of ways. Through interfaith dialogue the principle of unity-in-diversity is becoming the object of reflection, meditation and prayer. As a result, this principle is being recognised and applied as a truth that can transform lives.

At this particular point in time the interfaith experience emphasises the process of dialogue between adherents of different faiths. Believers are challenged to find within themselves the capacity to listen to the wisdom of other faiths, knowing that what they find will not weaken their own faith, but, rather, will enrich it. Dialogue, at the deepest level, is leading to a transformation of faith. For true dialogue necessarily involves an openness to the other and a willingness to seek out new levels of meaning within the established traditions of one's own faith.

Because it is centred on listening and on being open to fresh insights, the interfaith experience is creating a new intuitive body of religious thought and understanding. It is surely creating a pathway in consciousness between the human kingdom and the higher, transcendent kingdoms, a pathway down which revelation may flow.

The Triangles network helps strengthen the subjective basis of the interfaith movement. Although we come from different spiritual traditions, we work together in service of the Plan. As we invoke light and goodwill each day, we affirm the oneness of humanity and the ability of human beings to co-operate for the Greater Good.

Quotations on Interfaith Dialogue

The key to truth lies in the unifying power of Comparative Religion. Only those principles and truths which are universally recognized and which find their place in every religion are truly necessary to salvation. The secondary and controversial line of presented truths is usually unnecessary or significant only in so far as it buttresses the primary and essential truth.

Alice Bailey

Since it is my belief that harmony among different religious traditions is extremely important, extremely necessary, I would like to suggest a few ideas on ways it can be promoted. First, I suggest we encourage meetings among scholars from different religious backgrounds to discuss differences and similarities in their traditions in order to promote empathy and to improve our knowledge about one another. Secondly, I suggest that we encourage meetings between people from different religious traditions who have had some deeper spiritual experiences. They need not be scholars, but instead genuine practitioners who come together and share insights as a result of religious practice. According to my own experience, this is a powerful and effective means of enlightening each other in a more profound and direct way.

H.H. The Dalai Lama

My picture is of the religious history of humankind becoming one history. It is largely true that Christian theology is no longer denominational theology. In considering a theological issue, most students will read those who have made significant contributions to the subject, regardless of their denomination. In the same way, we shall increasingly draw upon insights from the great religious traditions. We need, as Durwood Foster says, 'to be really encountered in mind and heart by the truth of the other, without being able either to dismiss it or subsume it under one's own truth'.

Marcus Braybrooke

In the next generation the question may not be which religion one belongs to, but whether religion itself is of value. Those who have had some experience of transcendence must find some way to communicate the fact that the experience of the Ultimate Mystery is open to every human person who chooses to pursue the search for truth and embark on the spiritual journey – a journey which is literally without end.

Thomas Keating

We do not abandon our own particular religious loyalties; but we shall deepen them in dialogue and concourse with other religions in order to find those deeper roots in each religion which affirm the unity of global humanity and which affirm the transcendent Love in which we all live and move and have our being.

Paulos Mar Gregorios

I feel the greatest challenge of interfaith encounter comes from the question of how we understand spirituality. Many people, when they say, "Where is the truth? What is the truth?", have a very possessive way of understanding truth. They think it is something you can define. You can say it in words, put it into your handbag and off you go: "This is the truth without which I can't live". But I look at the truth as something that has to be lived and realised, something that is linked to the greatest reality of all which is so comprehensive and complete that we can only ever reflect aspects of it. I have got, if you like, an evolutionary, partial perception of the truth. I want to come closer and closer to the truth. The truth is linked to light, to enlightenment, to fulfilment. No one human being, or no one human group, can claim that they possess it all and there is none elsewhere. I think the challenge of interfaith encounter in the realm of spirituality can perhaps be summed up as the need for revisioning spirituality. We need to look at spirituality in a new way and practise it in a new way.

Ursula King

The Planetary Network

The planetary network of light, love and service is transforming the mental climate of the planet, reorientating humanity to spiritual attitudes and values. The groups and activities reported in the Bulletin reflect different aspects of the network. Please send information on any activities that could be included in a future Bulletin.

Time for Peace

2 Minutes – One World

Time for Peace project aims “to generate a world-wide movement for 2 minutes silence a day” to contribute to individual and global inner peace.

Started in 1994, *Time for Peace* is based on the premise that the practice of silence is a means to restore harmony and balance: “We can all help to mend the fabric of our society by becoming more calm, centred and still inside. This state of being communicates itself silently to others producing a ripple effect which radiates out to the rest of our environment and community... the regular practice of silence is an ancient spiritual tradition honoured by many. It naturally provides a way of replenishing our inner resources.... Silence is the universal language.”

People from all over the world are invited to spend 2 minutes a day in silence on the hour or whenever appropriate to help build a “positive, loving, healthy culture”. It is planned to use the run-up to the new millennium as a focal point to involve people in the project. “The new millennium offers a unique opportunity for us to come together and jointly create something which befits the historical significance of the occasion. Just imagine a wave of silence rolling around the world to usher in the new millennium.”

A further aim of the group’s work is to establish places of peace – Still Places – in parks or squares in cities around the world “to provide an opportunity for people in the city to enter into the quiet and find peace of mind”. A Still Place “helps one to become centred and in tune with the harmonic Laws of Nature”.

- Time for Peace, 16 Portland Street, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 2PB UK

Harmonic Convergence 2

Harmonic Convergence 2 is the second in a series of worldwide prayer and meditation initiatives. The first convergence took place in August 1987 when thousands of people focused their thoughts on helping the human race.

This year, Harmonic Convergence 2 will take place over the three days, July 25-27. People of goodwill are invited to link in thought and to focus on peace, love and light.

News of the second Harmonic Convergence was sent in by Barbara Wolf. She suggests that a special focus be placed on the Great Invocation from July 25-27.

- Harmonic Convergence, c/o Barbara Wolf, 218 Dartmouth Street, Rochester, New York 14607, USA

From my point of view, I see it as essential that the spiritual element which is there in every religion comes forth so that we see that spirituality itself has no labels. Love is love, sacrifice is sacrifice, sharing is sharing, beneficence is beneficence. These values are present in all religions.

A.T. Ariyaratne

Three Spiritual Festivals

Looking back over the vast stretch of humanity's history we can discern various common themes of shared experience. These run like golden threads binding us all into the warp and woof of a gradually developing and expanding human consciousness. One of the most basic of these threads is the capacity to experience the world in spiritual terms. Every civilisation and culture bears witness to the fact that human beings have an innate sense of the sacred – a sense which evokes awe and wonder, and which has demanded and continues to demand a living demonstration of the principles of spiritual obedience, of sacrifice and of love.

The insights and experiences of all civilisations and cultures that were initially known only by the interested and educated few are now available to everyone. Our present multicultural and multifaith societies expose us all to spiritual traditions that might have once been regarded as alien, but which are now recognised by the open-minded and spiritually alive as traditions of great value and worth embodying timeless truths about the human condition and about humanity's relationship to the inner spiritual worlds.

We are in the uniquely privileged position of being able to garner the best that these traditions have to offer and thereby enormously increase our capacity

to understand, to love and – most important of all – to serve. One of the most effective ways to serve is through the dedicated and rhythmic practice of prayer and meditation. The rhythm that we are most familiar with is the daily one. But there is also the great annual cycle of spiritual festivals which characterise every religion. Gradually, out of this spiritual diversity a pattern of the world-wide celebration of certain festivals is emerging.

Each year we place a special focus on a sequence of three. The first is the Festival of Easter, the great celebration of the risen Christ when we recognise and work with the life impulses and energies which enable the soul to free itself from the tomb of materialism and become spiritually creative. The second is the eastern Festival of Wesak when we focus our minds and hearts on the meaning of illumination, wisdom and compassion, and on how the light which the Buddha embodied continues to shine and point the way forward for humanity. The third festival, the Christ's Festival or the Festival of Humanity, is very recent in origin. It is only in this century that humanity has recognised its inherent unity and has committed itself to work with goodwill for the benefit of all people everywhere. It is for this reason that this festival is also known as the Festival of Goodwill. World Invocation Day is observed at this time.

Easter Festival

Wesak Festival

Christ's Festival/World Invocation Day

24th March

22nd April

22nd May

Triangles is a world service activity in which people link in thought in groups of three to create a planetary network of triangles of light and goodwill. Using a world prayer, the Great Invocation, they invoke light and love as a service to humanity. Further information is available on request from Triangles. The Triangles Bulletin is for men and women of goodwill and is published four times a year in Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish. Triangles is an activity of the Lucis Trust, a non-profit educational charity which exists to promote right human relations.

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