

## Thoughts for Pondering

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**

"We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race."

### **Kofi Annan**

Humanity is recognizing the need for a more vital approach to God and one more intelligently presented; men are tired of doctrinal and dogmatic differences and quarrels; the study of Comparative Religion has demonstrated that the foundational truths in every faith are identical. Because of this universality, they evoke recognition and response from all men everywhere.

### **Alice Bailey**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love: where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

### **St. Francis of Assisi**

I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love."

### **Mohandas Gandhi**

In the next 30 years we can destroy our world. With the very same powers — spiritual, social, scientific — we can evolve our world. Our mission is to serve as catalysts for a planetary awakening in our lifetime, to take a non-violent path to the next stage of our evolution.

### **Barbara Marx Hubbard**

I never will, by any word or act, bow to the shrine of intolerance or admit a right of inquiry into the religious opinions of others.

### **Thomas Jefferson**

...in place of the Old Bottom Line of money and power, a New Bottom Line of Love and Generosity is possible. People of all faiths need to shape a political and social movement that reaffirms the most generous, peace-oriented, social justice-committed, and loving truths of the spiritual heritage of the human race.

### **Rabbi Michael Lerner**

Let me say this loud and clear. There is a world of difference between terrorist acts and the Islamic Shari'a. Islam is not only a religion, but a way of life. And at its heart lie the sacred principles of tolerance and dialogue.

### **King Hussein of Jordan**

There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions and no peace among the religions without dialogue.

### **Fr. Hans Kung**

The world's major religions in the end all want the same thing, even though they were born in different places and circumstances on this planet. What the world needs today is a convergence of the different religions in the search for and definition of the cosmic or divine laws which ought to regulate our behaviour on this planet.

### **Robert Muller**

It is particularly recommended, as a means of uniting the inhabitants of the village into one family, that while each faithfully adheres to the principles which he most approves, at the same time all shall think charitably of their neighbours respecting their religious opinions, and not presumptuously suppose that theirs alone are right.

### **Robert Owen**

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

### **Teilhard De Chardin**

Certainly the vision of the spiritual nature of man and the universe brings the conviction that the human potential is unlimited and that we stand at the threshold over which a quantum leap in consciousness is possible.

### **George Trevelyan**

"...each year carries us closer to the centre of power, the major effect of which will be to induce recognition of man's essential unity, of the processes of sharing and of cooperation and of the emergence of that new world religion whose keynote will be universality and initiation. If the word "initiation" signifies the processes of "entering into," then it is indeed true today that humanity is undergoing a true initiation as it enters into the new age of Aquarius; it will then be subjected to those energies and forces which will break down the barriers of separation, and which will blend and fuse the consciousness of all men into that unity which is distinctive of the Christ consciousness.

### **Alice Bailey**

## **Quotes from some of the scheduled speakers at the WPR in Melbourne:**

As a student of politics, I regard a Charter for Compassion as that critical missing link in our endeavour to create understanding and empathy among diverse religious and cultural communities in an increasingly globalised, but polarised, world.

### **Dr. Chandra Muzaffar**

How can I transform the power of religions into the directions of loving peace? Particularly today as we face the issues of global warming and all sorts of global crises, how can we religious communities help save our world and help peace to prevail around the world? We can achieve this when different religions are working in the same direction and concentrating on peace-work and taking the initiative to move the militants and politicians to give up biochemical weapons and nuclear weapons that destroy the whole world and human beings.

### **Ven. Dharma Master Hsin Tao**

"We are participants in a process that will always be larger than our imagination or our best sciences can fully explain."

### **Mary Evelyn Tucker in Science and Cosmology**

Without the inner freedom it takes to defy the chains of convention, without the self-esteem it takes to trust our own truth, we face our worlds unprepared and unaware.

### **Sister Joan Chittister OSB**

To calculate our degree of poverty of spirit we have only to evaluate our desire. What are we desiring and how are we desiring it? Usually the more we desire the less poor in spirit we are. Heightened desire leads to a discontentedness and self-centredness that blocks the natural flow of compassion that is the life of the spirit and the authenticating brightness of our enlightenment in Christ.

### **Father Laurence Freeman**

We prefer that the religion remains simple and respectful of all, including the animals, vegetation and all the other creatures and objects of nature without which we humans cannot survive on this planet.

### **Prof. Wande Abimbola**

Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.

### **HH The Dalai Lama**