

Paradise lost: Religion, cultural diversity and social cohesion in Australia and across the World

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National Europe Centre Paper No. 79

Paper presented to conference entitled
*The Challenges of Immigration and Integration in the
European Union and Australia,*
18-20 February 2003, University of Sydney

Abstract: The September 11th and October 12th terrorist attacks and their aftermath have focussed Australia's attention on the shift from a Christian to a paradoxically multifaith and secular Australia, and on the diasporic links between organizations' source countries and on Australian ethnic and religious leaders. They are now under greater scrutiny and accountability. In outlining Australia's current predicament, Professor Cahill will take a global perspective and draw on current Australian research to suggest a way forward by addressing key issues and inoculating our society against ethnic and religious extremism. Faith traditions with their focus on the ultimate and the absolute as well as the local and the universal have been key elements in the formation of Australia's pluralist and multicultural society. With their localised presence, their community ethic and their universalist outlook, most religious groups have made positive contributions to the construction of a multicultural society. On the other side of the coin, religion has sometimes acted as an oppressive or divisive force such as in the suppression of Aboriginal spirituality, the tensions between Catholicism and Protestantism that was a feature of Australian society until the 1960s and the tensions between certain immigrant communities as a direct consequence of hostilities in their home countries. In more recent times, some ethnoreligious groups could have been more proactive and assertive in assisting their communities to address specific issues such as the AIDS threat, sexual corruption and the gambling epidemic. However, religion at its best remains an asset and a resource, but this can only be achieved through a repositioning of the link between religion and civil society.

Introduction

After September 11th 2001, never again can we, as citizens of the world, look at skyscrapers in quite the same way; they are now symbols of the risk and unpredictability of the future; the events of September 11th. were symptomatic and brought to the public surface long-term trends. After October 12th., we Australians can no longer wander about our tourist resorts in thongs and shorts with quite the same relaxed, carefree Aussie spirit. Our multicultural innocence was lost at Kuta Beach on the island paradise of Bali when so many Australians lost their lives. It was a Hindu island paradise carefully chosen by the extremist Islamic terrorists to show their white-hot hatred not just for Hindus persecuting their co-religionists in India but more specifically against the West, particularly Americans and including Australians. Speaking through the Al-Jazeera TV network, Osama bin Laden, the international warlord and now hero to the downtrodden Muslim masses across the world, approved, citing six countries, including Australia, to be wary: “Australia was warned about its participation in Afghanistan and its ignoble contribution to the separation of East Timor. It ignored this warning until it was awakened by the echoes of explosions in Bali. As you assassinate, so will you be assassinated; and as you bomb, so will you be bombed”.

Ten days after the terrorist attacks, 10,000 people of all faith communities and people of goodwill came together at Melbourne Park for a multi-faith gathering. Seven faith communities drew on their spiritual heritages to reflect on the events of September 11th. 2001.

- the Buddhist community, to the deep-throated gong of a bell sounding the passing of life, asked us to close our eyes and become bodies of light, praying for this disaster not to worsen and for us to be enlightened that the enemy and those who harm us can be our best teachers and that we consider the Karmic causes and origins of the hatred that drove the terrorists
- to the sound of the ram’s horn, the oldest known musical instrument, in the year 5762 of its calendar, the Jewish community asked us to reflect on the Talmudic saying, “Those who share in the grief of the community will share in its redemption” to which they invited us to respond with “Amen”
- the Hindus focussed on the aphorism that ‘experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you’, lighting the candle of love for peace and prosperity for the world and for the departed souls, and praying “may there be peace in the heavenly regions” in line with the great Hindu principle of *ahimsa*, non injury, that “it is the principle of the pure of heart never to injure others, even when they themselves have been fatefully injured” and with Gandhi’s advice that “an eye for an eye, and soon everyone will be blind”.
- the Sikhs were consumed by the horror of it all, and in our despair they cried out, “O God, the world is going up in flames; save it; by whatever means, deliver it. O God, who can save it?”

- the Muslim imam, focussing on “the convulsion of the days”, in sending their community’s condolences to the people of the USA, prayed for peace and harmony in the whole world and reminded us, “O all mankind, fear your Lord”.
- the Bahais prayed, “O my God, O my God, unite the hearts of thy servants; help them to serve thee; leave them not to themselves”, enjoining us that “the thought of hatred must be destroyed by the more powerful thought of love”
- and lastly, the Christian singer sang of “beautiful brokenness’, the beautiful brokenness of the cross followed by the resurrectional transformation, and the reader recited the Beatitudes, “Blessed are they who mourn; they shall be comforted; blessed are the merciful; they shall have mercy shown them”, imploring through the voice of the carpenter, “we want justice, not vengeance”.

Ironically and sadly, a year later certain faith leaders in Melbourne refused to have a similar service, and it was held in St. Paul’s Anglican Cathedral. Here, in Australia, religious tolerance and acceptance have been hallmarks of our multicultural society but, in rapidly changing circumstances, we need to have co-operative and imaginative leadership of our ethnic and religious communities as Australia moves from being a Christian to a multi-faith society. Imagination is at the core of globalization, and we must have the imagination and courage to implement new solutions as new issues are addressed.

The terrorist attacks brought home to us, firstly, that the post-Cold War world has changed and the nature of the low-tech, high impact audacity highlights the central themes of the current world crisis; secondly, that the global societies squandered the opportunities of the 1990s to create a new world order and that 9/11 gives another, perhaps final, opportunity to create civilizational dialogue and a more appropriate form of global governance though subsequent events of the aftermath do not give optimism; and lastly, that religion, whether transcendent religion or perverted religion, is at the centre of world stage. It is very apparent, certainly for the several decades ahead, that religion and faith are not going to drift away into a privatised world as many atheists and agnostics had predicted. In fact, one of the major features of twentieth century history was the enduring stability of religion and its institutions - 86 per cent of the world’s population belong to a religious faith (2 billion are Christian, 1.2 are Muslim and .8 billion are Hindu) and in Australia, the comparable figure is about 75 per cent.

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The recent Pew Global Attitudes Project (Pew Research Center 2002) in a survey of 44 countries late in 2002, not including Australia, measured the importance of religion in people’s lives. In Africa, no fewer than eight-in-ten in any country saw religion as very important personally. Majorities in every Latin American country also subscribe to the same view with the exception of Argentina (only 39%).

In Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Mali and Senegal, more than nine-in-ten also consider religion as very important in their lives though less so in Turkey (65%) and particularly Uzbekistan (35%). In Europe, religion is not considered very important with the lowest scores of 11 per cent in the Czech Republic and France. In the United Kingdom, 39 per cent considered religion as very important, just behind the European leaders (Poland 39% and the Ukraine 35%). Religion is very important in all Asian countries surveyed (Indonesia 95%, India 92%, the Philippines 88% and Bangladesh 88%) with the exception of Korea (25%), Viet Nam (24%) and Japan (12%). Thus, secularism is present in all the wealthy countries with one very major exception - the United States of America where 59 per cent of the population consider that religion is very important in their lives.

We live in a world where it is less possible to speak of “Christendom” or “the Islamic world” as religious diasporas continue to be extended across the world. In this generation since World War II, Christianity has moved in its population base from the countries of the rich North to the countries of the poor South, and this trend will never be reversed. The next Pope will more likely come from a country in the South, the two most favoured candidates at the moment being a Nigerian cardinal and a cardinal from Tegucigalpa in Honduras. In London, each Sunday, the majority of church-goers are black. Both Islam and Hinduism perceive in Europe a great spiritual vacuum which they have long-term designs to fill. Religion could well be replacing ideology in a world without boundaries as more people in a less predictable world seek stability in faith in God or the Great Beyond and citizens in functioning democracies such as India and Turkey place their future in faith-based political parties. The success of Christian pentecostalism and evangelical groups has been due to the negative effects of globalization - the response of many believers to economic globalization has been to rely on their religious faith to reinforce a defensive, “circle-the-wagons” mentality, increasing their fear of those perceived to be ‘other’. (Bartchy 2002)

The future is not one of increasing secularism, and there will be increasing competition and conflict between the major religions (Bartchy 2002). Religious extremism may align itself with a highly politicized, perverted faith that is prepared to go beyond the previous parameters of violence - the antidote is not more secularism of the 1960s and 1970s type against which the extremists are usually reacting but rather a strengthening of religious moderation. Throughout these events, and so many other recent ones too numerous to list, have reverberated the threads of diversity and religion in a globalizing world. While some may dismiss it as globaloney, globalization, or preferably global-local interconnectedness, with its compression of time and space and its intensification of the world’s interdependency built on the revolutions in transportation and the information technologies and the political collapse of the Soviet Union, is an unstoppable juggernaut. The tragedy in the USA encapsulates the central themes of globalization, not just of economic globalization which the global intelligentsia and opinion-makers focus upon, but also of social and cultural globalization in which religion, language and ethnicity are intertwined with economic, political and media processes.

I want to reflect, in the light of September 11th, on the formation of multi-faith societies across the world, and the interconnection with certain key features of globalization. As we work our way through this present world crisis, I would like to suggest that governance bodies, whether at the local, national or international levels, need to renegotiate their relationships with faith communities, and that faith communities need to renegotiate their relationships with each other in the light of their profoundest spiritualities. This global-local faiths agenda will require leadership and investment on all sides together with the capacity to imagine a new future. Imagination is at the core of globalization.

Firstly, I want to briefly focus on the six main features of globalization and their interaction with religiosity and religious organizations, and ultimately the spiritualities that underpin the great global and local religious traditions.

The Triumph of Global Capitalism

- with the fall of the communist states and their command economies, global financial capitalism, if not crass commercialism, has triumphed. It talks up the notions of free and open trade, convertible currencies and shares as the engine of growth on behalf of the world's leading countries who corrupt the world's agricultural systems and allow the free flows of money, technology and media images but not of people; it talks down the losers, the basketcase countries, mostly in Africa, and their monstrous debt burdens increasing the cleavage between rich and poor; but it is a capitalism built always on shifting sands as the markets react to world events. Capitalism has been accompanied, from the 1950s, by secularization, modernity and now post-modernity. Yet across the world, according to Haynes (1998), there have been a range of religious responses such as resistance both to the disestablishment of state religion and to the differentiation of the religious and the secular as seen in the rise of the fundamentalist or revivalist groups; such as the mobilizations and counter-mobilizations against other religions and secular movements or parties; such as religious groups' mobilization in defence of the rule of law and of social, political and religious rights. The anti-religious ideologies of Nazism and Communism have been thrown into the dustbin of history. As historians reflect upon the twentieth century, according to the Oxford historian, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, author of a major study of the history of the second Christian millennium, they will be impressed by the enduring stability of religion and its institutions. All the predictions by such varied individuals as Nietzsche, H.G. Wells, Lenin, Bertrand Russell and Arthur C. Clarke that religion would die have proved wrong. Religion is now very much at centre stage.

The Rise of the Global City

- The rise of the global city is a second important feature of globalization because the global city plugs the nation into the world's networks. And diversity takes place mainly in the city. Secular

global cities such as New York and Singapore with their skyscrapers thrusting to the skies, nodes of the global network, sucking up the resources of their rural hinterlands, triggering the politics of resentment and grievance and exploiting the rural and migrant workers who flock to the city - this further exacerbates the rift between the professional global and national elites together with their techno-cadres and the disenfranchised, the lowly skilled and the job insecure. While religions always hanker for the solitude of the fields and the forest, essentially, while they may weep over the city, they are engaged in and with the cities with their beauty and their filth, their grandeur and their corruption, their boredom and their creativity, the place for the rich and the homeless, the artistic and the bored. And it is in the cities that we are seeing the rise of new religions with more religious diversification and where inter-faith encounters are taking place all the time - in the neighbourhoods and the schools, the factories and the shops. Counterbalancing the rich global cities are the distraught, impoverished cities of the world, cesspools of poverty, disease and corruption. And standing between them as a sign and symbol of peace between the religions is the City of Jerusalem, the City of Peace, the city sacred to the Three Peoples of the Book, and there cannot be peace in the Middle East unless there is agreement over Jerusalem.

The Formation of Global Ethnic and Religious Diasporas

- A third feature is people on the move. Central to globalization has been the creation of multilayered movements of people such as the movements of global professionals working for international organizations, national governments, global social movements and transnational corporations; universities are moving their students world-wide as part of the internationalization of their curricula; then there are the international contract workers, landfarers and seafarers, led by the Filipinos; older tourists and their backpacker children, conference attendees and religious pilgrims to places such as Mecca and Rome paying homage at their sacred sites. As economic expectations rise, there are the permanent migrants together with border-hoppers, and as inter-ethnic conflicts rise, growing numbers of asylum claimants and refugees, victims of ethnic cleansing and growing numbers of illegals looking for a better future they see each night on their television screens; in the future, there will be environmental refugees as sea levels rise and small island nations endure their version of the Great Flood. Also to be noted is the rise of international marriages, a very accurate barometer of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. Fortunately or unfortunately, love takes little notice of border sentry-posts, and the old Chinese saying that “a chicken does not marry a duck” is increasingly irrelevant - yet religious and ethnic community leaders have varied enormously in their reaction to outright condemnation and ostracization to quiet antipathy to genuine ambivalence or to perhaps a resigned acceptance of the inevitable. This reconfiguration of national and religious profiles implies that religious pluralism cannot be wished away nor can the intermingling of cultures and religions be synthesized into a syncretist amalgam in some form of global culture and global religion. Also as a consequence, diasporas to a greater or lesser extent create a transnational ethnic economy and a transnational public sphere which carries on their debates overtly or covertly in discourse perhaps little known to their host countries and to

McWorld - the ICT revolution means they can more easily be networked across time and space; if these diasporas provide cities with multicultural colour and cuisine, they also can provide cover for religious encapsulation and, unfortunately, for international criminals and terrorists.

The Linguistic and Communication Landscape and Political Power

- Associated with diasporas is a fourth feature: the emergence of a complex multilayered linguistic *pasticchio* dominated by several variants of global English dominant as the international means of communication but layered underneath are other world languages such as Arabic, Mandarin and Spanish, other local forms of English such as Singlish, Manglish and Taglish, national languages such as Swedish and Korean together with regional, tribal and indigenous languages. For a while it was thought that the internet would be dominated by English - several years ago, 80 per cent of internet exchanges were in English, whereas by 2000 it had dropped to 45 per cent with Chinese, Hindi and Spanish the big movers. Within two years in 2003, the figure is estimated to be 29 per cent (Global Reach 2001). Despite the delusions of the Americanists, cultural homogenization is not the global future. This is not to say that burgers and PCs will not be available across the world. The global future will be multilayered with, as one top layer, a common but differentiated global culture but there will be other layers that will reflect the values and practices of particular religions, languages, cultures and regions. Global society, as the power of the United States recedes, will be criss-crossed by a multi-polar or multi-nodal world as countries such as Russia and China and political groupings such as the European Union, the Ibero-American Summit, the Portuguese grouping and the Organization of Islamic Council gain cohesion and strength. China, India and Russia have begun a high level dialogue to create a 'strategic triangle' and 'a multi-polar world' which is a euphemism to counter the USA's global dominance. Other challenges will come from the Arab and non-Arab Islamic world and from the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds of Europe and Latin America now that Spain is gaining in confidence after the dark years of the Francoist regime. For global faith communities, the implication is the maintenance of the balance between a universalism that seeks unity and uniformity across the world and a network of particularisms where faith communities are too aligned to cultures and ethnicities that degenerate into destructive ethnonationalisms.

Localized wars and the politics of identity

- Partly as a consequence of the end of the Cold War, a fifth and dangerous aspect, highlighted by the USA tragedy, is the rise of the so-called politics of identity, the politics of memory, the politics of retribution. At the last Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace held in Amman in November 1999, its Secretary-General, Dr. William Vendley, stated the new post Cold War context: "The end of the ideologically based proxy wars in the East-West competition of the Cold War has given way to the rapid proliferation of smaller scale, more localised armed conflicts. Increasingly people have sought security through identification with a group closer to their own

experience and over which they have some control. Most violent conflicts today occur between identity groups within national boundaries, making them inter-group in character and internal or intra-national in scope. Group identity may be based on some mix of ethnicity, clan, race or geographical affiliation, but it also typically involves religious factors. Recent examples complement more ancient ones in illustrating that religion, insofar as it is related to how a people or culture define themselves, can be manipulated to become a factor in this type of conflict” (Vendley 1999: 1). Since 1989, there have been approximately 110 armed conflicts, seven between States while the rest are intra-State in nature. Part of this scenario is the emergence of non-State actors such as local and international warlords, ethnically or religiously motivated terrorist groups and money oriented criminal groups involved in the illegal drug or diamond trade and laundering money through safe havens. The future, if historical reflection is to be our guide, is for more, not less, refugees.

Risk and Global Governance

- The sixth and connected feature concerns risk and global governance. As we have already said, never again can we look at skyscrapers in the same way. These steel and concrete cathedrals, those tall minarets reaching to the sky, are now symbols of the risk and unpredictability of the future. For more than a decade, theorists like Ulrich Beck have been writing about the “world risk society”, about the risk of a backlash against the West; they have spoken about the link between risk, responsibility and trust, and of “organized irresponsibility” and the “limited controllability” of the dangers we face, the dangers from the disorganized capitalist market, of the polluted environment, of the fanatical terrorist group, of the destruction of tradition and wisdom and scholarship.

The Contemporary Currency of Religion

In response to the challenges of globalizing forces, some world leaders have seen the major religions as part of the solution because of their fundamentally altruistic orientation and because of both their unrivalled access to grassroots communities and their world-wide networks.

But religion and spirituality did not die except perhaps in the West with its fear of death and its fetish with “fun”. Some sociologists came to the conclusion that faith builds community, and the psychologists and psychiatrists, over-aware of the destructive nature of religious phobias and scruples, realised that, other things being equal, faith is more related to emotional stability than to instability. In China after 50 years of official atheism, there is a profound spiritual thirst. In the West, the youth suicide and youth drug addiction studies suggest that young people need not just a stable family life unmessed by divorce and separation but a belief in something beyond themselves instead of the gnawing, superficial nihilism of pop culture with its fattening fast food, decibel music, and drugged-up

pop stars. Religion can remind us that sitting in front of a computer screen, like sitting in front of a poker machine or hushly around a black-jack table, are activities not fully human. As our computers become more and more clogged up with emails, religion reminds us that print is not necessarily communication, information is not necessarily wisdom, and lack of noise is not necessarily silence.

If it is to survive and develop over the long term, a cultural system needs to have a spiritual base. It might well be a civic rather than a spiritual faith though the foundations of civic religion are weak. Religion also offers an antidote to cultural homogenization; it can build a sense of belonging and help in constructing a multifaceted identity in a global world where the sense of "home" has become more problematic. It provides an additional binding element to the links that bond together diasporic or transnational communities. Religion has become more public, except in the Western developed countries where, with clericalism in its death throes, it decays behind closed doors in the main, privatised and relativised, except for occasions of tragedy such as the death of Princess Diana where civic religion comes to the fore. Religion still retains its potency as seen in the rise of the BJP in India, in the emergence of charismatic and evangelical movements in European-heritage countries and the rise of the Falun Gong in contemporary China. If religion has retained its potency, it has also retained its capacity to be manipulated. Ex-communist Russian leaders have rushed to be photographed smilingly alongside Orthodox leaders; religious factors have been one factor in almost all local conflicts in Africa as well as being a positive factor in reconciliation in Sierra Leone in 1999 and 2000; religiosity has never not been a factor in the various stages of the recent Balkans saga and religion remains an underlying factor in the major hotspots such as Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and Chechnya.

Religion and global-local social capital

What are the implications of this changing, diverse, disjunctional, multi-faith landscape? What can be done to foster and guarantee ethnic and religious cohesion in the global-local neighbourhood? In a multi-faith world, what can we, as a group of people holding common wealth and social capital, do to move beyond the WTC calamity with the acrid smoke and soot now dissipating from the nostrils of the world, after the removal of the anti-Islamic Taliban and now on the eve of the Iraq War?

THE GLOBAL-LOCAL FAITHS AGENDA

In endeavouring to provide the contours of a response and the formulation of a hyphenated global-local faiths agenda, we need to take a reality check and acknowledge, firstly, that faith communities, especially the missionizing ones, are in competition with each other in marketing their faith products and keeping their market share as much as they are in conflict or in co-operation with each other. Co-operation is not easily achieved even when there is no historical baggage of hostility and war. While

belief is much more than a commercial product, the religious message still has to be marketed and packaged because each thinks that their product is the best, especially if they are insistent on themselves as repositories of ultimate truth. There is the movement towards unity and co-operation as seen in the ecumenical movement within Christianity, the interfaith dialogues at national and international levels and the growth of organizations such as the World Conference of Religion for Peace and the World's Parliament of Religions. But this is countermanded by the fact that faith communities are at one level players in the global marketing game as seen in the global pastorate of Papa Wojtyla and the spiritual interventions of the Dalai Lama.

Secondly, religious faith is a solid, robust entity, not easily moved nor opened to global horizons. There are the religious captive identities, held within their own subcultural and religious enclosure, which avoid or are afraid of contact with religiously different groups whom they may demonise, which are aggressively bigoted in arguing for the superiority of their own religious faith, and are strenuously opposed to contacts with other faiths and to entering into any kind of dialogue. Then there is the more comfortable religiously encapsulated identities which participate primarily within their own religious group with some but little outside contact, have internalized the superiority of their faith commitment but not aggressively so, aware of the existence of other faiths but apathetic towards them and ignorant of them.

What we need are reflective inter-religious identities with a global view like cosmonauts who are fully committed to their faith tradition, able to clarify and defend its values and attitudes but able to reflect on the essential nature of religious activity and expression and wish to dialogue with and participate with members of other faith groups and their religious rituals; in that commitment to their own faith, they have moved beyond it in seeing all religious faiths in mystical and cosmic terms as expressions of God or the Absolute or the Numinous and have a multi-faith competency in terms of attitudes, knowledge and skills.

Thirdly, as has been already suggested, the varying kinds of interrelationships between religion, culture and nationalism imply that the emerging new order will see greater levels of ethnic and religious conflict. Whilst for all of us the experience of inter-faith contact generates warm, fuzzy, altruistic feelings, we need to warn against the naiveté that is often found in the inter-ethnic and inter-faith area which is full of hidden complexities, subtleties and vexed historical legacies. The aftermath events of the USA tragedy have highlighted this point. Religious fundamentalism is increasingly seen in the major religious groupings where the religious framework is aligned with a Biblical or Qu'ranic fundamentalism or with an introverted nationalism which does not accept the universalism that is at the authentic core of all major world religions.

Again, what can be done? In thinking both globally and locally, there are five steps that I would like to place on the religion and diversity agenda in the global ecumene:

1. International Governance Organizations and the Global Faiths Agenda

The construction of a realistic global governance agenda beyond what we presently have has become critical. The Manhattan message is that the world is in trouble, and that disorder in the world cannot be fenced off. At the emergency session of the World Conference on Religion and Peace held in New York 40 days after September 11th, the Islamic representatives complained that while they represent, with over one billion people, one sixth of humanity, they are not permanently represented on the Security Council. As part of this broader agenda, we need to construct and negotiate a global human coalition built partly around the major faith communities and their leaders. Of course, there has been some dialogue with many initiatives and the formation of organizations such as the Parliament of the World's Religions, the Three Faiths Forum and the World Conference of Religion and Peace. It seems to me that we need to engage religious community leadership not just with the fact that this is a multicultural and multifaith world, but, more importantly, that it is an inter-cultural and inter-religious world.

The international community has a vested interest in encouraging the transnational linking of the national and local nodes of global faith communities to hear the voices and narratives of their own particular diasporas and of other faiths and spiritualities, the voices of the many traditions, the pastoral and the mystical, at the core and at the periphery, the voices of moderation challenging the voices of extremism, highlighting and celebrating their internal unity and diversity and learning to engage with other religious traditions. The international community has a vested interest in encouraging, also at global and regional levels, strategic inter-faith contact not so much to understand and debate their religious similarities and differences, but to develop their own global theologies for a multi-faith world and to negotiate and address social and cultural issues, to address core issues such as poverty and human rights and to plan for the construction of global-local social and spiritual capital. The current structures and mechanisms need capacity-building in constructing a global architecture for religious tolerance, if not harmony.

But another change has taken place in managing diversity. Whereas public institutions at national and global levels downgraded or even ignored the role of religion during the Cold War except when it was convenient to co-opt religion in the ideological battle between Moscow and Washington, religion has been returning to centre stage as we have previously suggested. "Across the world, there is a dawning recognition that religions have both moral and institutional assets that, if mobilized and equipped, could provide uniquely important contributions to solving conflicts" (Vendley 1999: 1). In other words, religion is seen more as part of the solution than part of the problem. The World Bank is funding the World Faiths Development Dialogue with its centre in Oxford. World religious leaders were invited to participate in Davos 2003.

2. The Articulation of an International Covenant on Individual and Collective Religious Rights and Responsibilities

With the increasing formation of multi-faith societies, it has now become urgent to articulate more precisely the nature of religious rights for individuals and their faith communities and their mutual responsibilities to work for inter-religious harmony and global cohesion. It needs to be a document that addresses the contexts of diasporic communities and inter-faith contexts, and it seems appropriate that the articulation process should be fostered and choreographed by the United Nations but built upon a grass-roots educative and consultative process that involves faith communities across the world. My dream is that it be affirmed across the world by every religious community, modern and modernless.

Related to this is the notion of a global-local ethic. The contours of a global ethic are only emerging, and the trigger was the *UN Declaration on Human Rights* together with other international conventions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. But there are difficulties in the construction of a global ethic. In 1993, after a preparatory period, the Parliament of the World's Religions met in Chicago and approved the *Declaration toward a Global Ethic*, built around the axiom, there can be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. The Declaration was built around the basic principle, 'every human being must be treated humanely' found in every great religious or ethical tradition and also the so-called Golden Rule, "Do not do to another what you would not want to be done to you", and around the four fundamental ethical demands found in all the great religions, 'Do not kill, do not steal, do not lie, do not commit sexual immorality'.

3. The Repositioning of the Faith-State Relationship

In a global world characterised by ideoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, ethnoscapes and technoscapes, the role of the nation state has changed because it is inescapably vulnerable to global processes. Despite Kenichi Omae's claim that the nation state is increasingly "a nostalgic fiction", it will survive, as the popular song says, though some will divide and break up, and borders generally will become more porous. Each nation state has had to reposition itself in the fractal global neighbourhood. This raises the faith-state relationship which till now has expressed itself in the separation of religion and state on the one hand or in the close configuration between religion and government in theocratic states on the other. Neither extreme is helpful. Defining the social and political space for faith communities is a delicate art - it requires communities to practise their faith with due regard to their multi-faith contexts but also to accomplish their task of building up cultural, social and spiritual capital that contributes to the broader nation-building and world citizenship agenda. But it has to allow religion to be counter-cultural in critiquing society for its social and spiritual ills.

It seems to me that every society has to construct a multicultural or inter-faith agenda or charter or some such document that is built around generally accepted values and provides both structures and funds to be invested for the future well-being of nation states. In this process of repositioning, it seems

to me that the notion of 'secular' is not helpful because it is overburdened with too much historical baggage and needs to be replaced with the notion of 'a civil society'.

4. The Harnessing of International Business in the Creation of Global and National Social Capital

We are in a new situation as money, commodities and people chase each other around the world with the frenetic expansion of transnational corporate activity and the growing authority of financial institutions above the nation state. The anti-globalists see current global processes as essentially a continuation of the exploitative past. James Petras (1998) who dismisses the claims of globalists who suggest that their theories are "the filet mignon of social theory" suggests that the emerging social context - with the USA as the advance model of the future - is 'a nineteenth century lookalike' of Dickensian proportions with health care more dependent on income level, impoverished families sometimes neatly hiding their desperation, increased numbers of abandoned and exploited children, greater use of prison labour, downward mobility of the younger generations, longer work hours for salaried staff, increased job insecurity and regressive taxation coming increasingly from wage earners and from gambling with the transnational corporations becoming the artful dodgers of taxation.

The darker side thus has been that multinational corporations are able to play governments off against each other, resulting in a seeming need for the international co-ordination of corporate tax policies so as national tax bases are not eroded. Another negative is that some countries either because of such factors as national resource deficiency, lack of an educated workforce, dangerous agricultural and industrial practices or political or economic mismanagement have become or may become 'international basketcases'.

International and local business after the collapse of the World Trade Centre now have a vested interest in furthering the interrelationship between human rights observance, the democratization of nations and the social responsibility of business to build up social and spiritual capital. Globally engaged business-led impacts with their concept of tripled tiered accountability or the triple bottom line can help foster outlooks that are culturally and religiously inclusive and that accept global civic values. For example, contrary to the perceptions held in the West and pedalled by some autocratic Confucian-heritage politicians, countries in eastern and northern Asia have had substantive historical, non-royalist traditions in support of human rights as primary universal values. The non-royalist dictum, "The voice of the people is the voice of heaven" sounds suspiciously like the Latin dictum, "Vox populi, vox Dei".

5. The Interrogation by Faiths of their own Traditions

Lastly, religious traditions have an inherent tendency to be handcuffed to the past even if they are also fundamentally oriented to a this-world or beyond-world future. In the creation of civil societies, religion cannot be left to one side. They are handcuffed to an imagined, if not imaginary, past that is often based on poor history. As Flaubert remarked, “our ignorance of history makes us slander our own times”. There is ‘good’ religion, there is ‘bad’ religion; there are extremes in each religious tradition that become locked into their enclosed world-view. Every religion has its cancers and potential cancers; “what our world needs is men and women whose religious commitments are both clear and ambiguous, rooted and adaptive, particular and pluralistic, yet this would not be sufficient: in addition, we must probe our traditions so that we can identify and eradicate the pathologies that have contributed to inquisitions, holy wars, obscurantisms and exclusivisms...religiously committed men and women (who) come to the public forum with powerful and necessary tools for the transformation of the world. They bring the sacred into the public realm” (Boys, Lee & Bass 1995: 256).

Global faith communities would seem to have to confront one fundamental and three other challenges in interrogating their heritages and histories in a future-oriented way. The fundamental one is the attitude to religious pluralism, a religious pluralism that ensures peaceful co-existence and avoids any evangelical and forced missionization but allowing conversion and reciprocity - Ninian Smart (1996) has developed the twin notions of “soft non-relativism” and “infederated complementarity” to inform a religious pluralist view based on the three propositions (a) no world-view or revelation is susceptible of proof, so certitude is not possible (b) not all world-views teach compatible theses so there exists a rivalry even if there is considerable overlap - given the uncertainty, the only possible stance is soft non-relativism and (c) a multicultural stance implies a positive stance towards the different religions and world-views which complement each other and have something to teach each other whilst they co-exist in a world-wide federation. The three remaining challenges are these (1) the development of an ecological consciousness that recognizes the sacredness of the universe and the dangers of the exploitation of the world’s non-renewable resources (2) the doctrinal and inpractice commitment to the equality of male and female in and beyond their structures and the development of a feminist sensitivity that is not about power but about distributive justice, about care and nurturance and the importance of civility and human relatedness (3) commitment to the spiritual and the mystical, not being too distracted by their social and political lobbying activities and their welfare and educational initiatives and (4) the commitment to social justice that recognizes that all women and men have an inherent human dignity irrespective of whether they want to go to heaven or not.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Faith commitment as a part of multicultural Australia has been largely ignored, which is surprising given that the major confrontation in Australian society for the first 60 years of the 20th. century was more faith- than ethnic-based (Catholic vs. Protestant). After September 11th., there were two Islamic facilities, one in Brisbane and one in Adelaide, that were set on fire; there was a marked increase in the number of vandal attacks on Islamic mosques and, to a lesser extent, on some Jewish, Sikh and a few Christian buildings; there were many verbal and physical attacks upon Muslims and Sikhs, particularly upon Muslim women, many of whom were afraid to venture out onto the streets or into public for several weeks. Many sections of the media, especially the tabloids and the shock-jocks on talk-back radio, with their audiences have targetted Islam, reflecting the widespread prejudice and ignorance that exists within the Australian media, especially amongst its younger members. Islamophobia, if not Islamo-hatred, is now a reality in Australia. As well, there has been among educated Australians a silent shift to an anti-Israeli government stance that must not be mistaken as anti-Semitic.

Equally importantly and much more positively, there has occurred an engagement with Muslim people, who themselves have realised they cannot remain within their own spiritual and community cocoon. Across Australia, many multi-faith initiatives have occurred and this has created a new awareness and understanding. After October 12th., negative reactions seem to have been less in number according to the police evidence, perhaps because the police have been in a state of greater readiness. But there has been plenty of hate mail and numerous minor incidents that have gone unreported. And, in a repetition of history, we have had police raids on Muslim family homes, recalling the raids that were made on German and Italian Australian homes during World War II. Ethnic and religious leaders have been under surveillance and their phones tapped as Western leaders, led by President Bush, have torn up the rule books, and militarised the psyches of their peoples. Muslim leaders are now frightened, not at what has happened, but what might happen if a terrorist attack occurred in Australia. The lucky country may not be so lucky again.

Underlying all these developments has been a rise in the feeling, even amongst faith-committed people, that, firstly, recent overseas conflicts such as the Gulf, the Balkans, Sri Lanka and Central Asia have put Australia's social harmony at serious risk and, secondly, that religious extremism has the potential to destroy the fabric of Australia's civil, pluralist and democratic society. In both these concerns, there is the feeling that perhaps Australia's diversity has become too extended for the common good of an aspiring civil society, and that ethnic and ethnoreligious leaders, especially Muslim leaders, need to be called to greater accountability and scrutiny.

Australia's Religious Profile

Reflections on the last census in 2001 reveal:

- *the largest religious group in Australia remains Roman Catholic, just topping 5M for the first time but likely to slowly decline in coming decades with its future more dependent on the post-WWII Catholic immigrants than on its traditional Irish base which has been alienated since 1968 by the intransigence and incompetence of the hierarchy, especially on gender and sexuality issues*
- *the total number of Christians continues to grow slowly but in proportional terms there will be a similar slow decline unless there is a Christian revival in Australia which can be seen only amongst the more pentecostal and evangelical groups many of whom entertain the extreme theological idea that “all other religions are the work of Satan”. The Anglican Church decline has been arrested whilst the Orthodox churches, fearful of change, remain cocooned in their own ethnocratic worlds*
- *the number of non-Christians continues to grow quickly, now representing almost five per cent of the total population and probably a far greater proportion in actual attendees each week at synagogue, temple and mosque; between 1996 and 2001, there has been a spectacular growth in Buddhism (79% increase) and in both Hinduism (42%) and Islam (40%) and, intriguingly, in those who gave an inadequate description (552%) with over 70,000 stating that Jedi is their religious icon.*
- *there has been no growth in the “no religion” category, and this plateauing has been accompanied by a rise in interest in spiritualities of all kinds because the organized Christian churches have remained locked into their pasts*

At the moment, as we reflect on these statistics, we are seeing the coalescing of three historic shifts in Australia:

- (a) **the shift from a Christian to a paradoxically both multi-faith and secular society** which has highlighted, at the national level, the increasingly necessary search for transcendent values, symbols and sacred sites to guide the nation on its journey into the future. Should a cross have been placed on the tomb of the unknown soldier or should it have been a symbol that represents or summarizes all the great traditions of spirituality? Should Parliament begin with a perfunctory Our Father or a series of prayers and readings selected by each of the major religious groupings on a rotational basis? Why do we not have in Canberra a sacred space or a national sacred site separate from Parliament where we can come together as a nation for our national celebrations and to mourn our tragedies such as that at Bali? At this point in time, we should rid ourselves of the notion of a secular society with its implication of an areligious or anti-religious stance, but speak instead of a civil society in which faith communities, like other social movements, have their place. This leads to the second shift.

- (b) **the repositioning of the relationship between religion and state** that has been occurring for three decades. In Australia, religion and state have never been fully separated and nor should they be and nor can they be. The decision in the early 1970s to grant government funding to private schools has led to the smorgasbord of schools that partly reflect Australia's cultural diversity. More recently, faith communities, especially the small Salvation Army and the Catholic Church, have won the contracts for employment agencies to replace the Commonwealth Employment Service. Hopefully they are more caring than the old CES, but should all their personnel have to subscribe to "the Christian ethos"? In the area of school education, what are the limits to the creation of a religious and moral ethos if, for example, a teacher enters into a de facto relationship, or, as happened in Perth early in 2002 in a Christian Biblical school, a child was expelled because his mother entered into such a relationship? What do we do about a faith community whose authority structure does not subscribe to the Australian core value that males and females are equal? These are not questions with easy answers yet they are coming onto the agenda.
- (c) the third historic trend is more recent, and results from **the interface between the formation of religious and linguistic diaspora and the new technologies**. Airline transportation and the internet now allow religious communities to establish and reinforce their global linkages which can lead to greater support, co-operation and flows of updated and traditionally authentic thinking through a global faith community. There is, however, a downside, namely, that extremists and zealots can use cellular phones and the world-wide web to assist the planning and execution of their deeds. The pogroms in Gujarat early in 2002 have been called the first cellular phone killings (Lal 2002). They can construct websites that can be the intellectual basis for stirring up ethnic and religious hatred. They can more easily spread rumors and destructive innuendoes. For example, militant Hindus have explicitly rejected the non-violent legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. What is happening is that some ethnic and religious groups, in explicit examples of the politics of memory and the politics of grievance, are heavily investing in their own skewed and racist versions of history by constructing their own websites without any oversight by respected scholars (Lal 2002). Of course, this has always happened but the books and pamphlets could not be so easily disseminated whereas now dissemination is instant and worldwide. Australia is part of the global web, and Australian religious websites need to be monitored for their content. Leaders will have to be extraordinarily sensitive to their website content and to linksites outside Australia whose content can be bloodcurdling, and very destructive of inter-faith relations.

In making a response to our current predicament, I think we need to keep in mind two things:

1. Religion as a Positive, Constructive Force for Social Harmony
2. The Multi-Faceted Role of Religion in a Multi-Faith Society

1. Religion as a Constructive Force

It is commonplace to think, sometimes rightly, that religion is a negative and divisive force, not least among some ethnic community leaders who suffer from a unhealthy dose of anti-clericalism or think that religion is either irrelevant or even dangerous. Good religion reminds us that transcendent values are at the core of national integrity, and central to Australia's current crisis is a crisis over values. As an example, all religions have hospitality as a core value, and yet the boat people of 1788 could not be hospitable to a few thousand boat people of 2001. In the M.V. Tampa affair Australia refused to accept mainly Afghan Hazara refugees, fleeing the murderous, extremist zealotry of the Taliban - they had left the island called Christmas, an event associated with family and good tidings, humanity and salvation, and were transported to a phosphate Alcatraz. It highlighted that in Australia we did not have sufficient social and moral capital to have a sensible debate on the situation. It was good theatre appreciated by the overt white Australian supremacists and their covert fellow travellers on talk-back radio as they negotiated their way through a successful but immoral electoral campaign. But across the Muslim diasporic world it was seen as yet another humiliation and act of Western selfishness. Several weeks later, General Mushareff, the Pakistani leader, in an interview soon after S11 that gained very little publicity in Australia, complained bitterly on CNN that Australia could not be bothered taking a few hundred refugees when his country had already taken hundreds of thousands. We had demeaned ourselves.

In Australia, faith traditions with their focus on the ultimate and the absolute as well as the local and the universal have been key elements in the formation of Australia's pluralist society. Religious groupings have been formative of core social and moral Australian values and of public service, welfare and philanthropic traditions. With their localised presence, their community ethic and their universalist outlook, most religious groups have made positive contributions to the construction of Australia's multicultural society that has been recognized world-wide as a model and exemplar. They have played a major, if unrecognized, role in helping to assist in the settlement of immigrants and making them feel welcome, in changing the attitudes of Australians in welcoming the stranger to our midst, in holding Migration Sundays and various festivals and conferences, in pressing governments to implement policies and programs through bodies such as the Ecumenical Migration Centre and the Australian Catholic Migration Office, in creating a sense of belonging for immigrants and meeting their spiritual needs often in their first language and, lastly, in defusing ancient hatreds brought to Australia by immigrants and refugees as part of their cultural baggage.

2. Role of Religion as Cultural, Counter-cultural and Cross-cultural

Religion has sometimes acted as an oppressive or divisive force such as in the suppression of Aboriginal spirituality, the tensions between Protestantism and Catholicism that was a feature of Australian society until the 1960s and the tensions between certain immigrant communities as a direct result of hostilities in their home countries. In more recent times, some religious groups could have been more proactive and assertive in assisting their communities to address specific issues such as the AIDS threat, sexual corruption and the gambling epidemic. However, religion at its best remains an

asset and a resource. Religion can become a divisive force if integrated into a dangerous ethnonationalism or can be manipulated in such a way to foment rebellion and division that may be odds with its altruistic message and universalist strivings.

At their best, however, faith communities should be cultural, counter-cultural and cross-cultural both in word and in practice, and not be counter-productive. Each faith community needs to interrogate itself, its beliefs and its actions, and make the appropriate diagnosis. Whilst their faith traditions are necessarily based on memories of past events and religious figures such as the Buddha, Abraham, Jesus and Muhammed, religious leaders cannot indulge in or encourage their members to indulge in the politics of memory, the politics of grievance or the politics of retribution; instead, they must be future-oriented in imagining new initiatives and walking down new paths.

Firstly, faith communities should be **cultural** in two senses (a) creating social capital for the social and economic well-being of Australia as part of their commitment to the future of this country and (b) maintaining and developing the group's cultural and linguistic heritage down the generations and assisting the group to maintain its image and reputation. We can label these two aspects national social capital and group social capital. Social capital which is built around bonds, bridges, links and acceptance of the other indicates the processes that facilitate individual and social well-being and positive communal and societal outcomes within a nation or a group. A nation's social capital is built on an accurate understanding of its past through, firstly, solid but flexible social institutions that are resistant to corruption, fanaticism and zealotry and are able to deal constructively with the multilayered national and international flows of ideas, finances, peoples, technologies and media images. Secondly, it is further constructed through facilitative modes of communication and association between and across individuals, organizations and collective institutions, all underpinned by (I) positive psychosocial characteristics such as openness to new challenges and ambiguities, the tendency to modernity and long-sightedness, the propensity for care, nurturance and honesty and the readiness to trust people and institutions and (II) positive cultural and religious values, norms and behaviours that produce success in economic, political, military, recreational and other endeavours. As John Montgomery has commented, social capital "is not displayed in almanacs, stock market reports or tourist advertisements; its presence has to be discovered through intuition or diligent rationalism. Yet it is ubiquitous; it is so often invoked to enhance desired behaviour in the present or to bring about purposeful change for the future" (Montgomery 2001: 1). It is reflected in the stability and solidity of institutions; it highlights trust and its maximization in public life; it underpins and influences the flows of communicating and associating between individuals and collective entities like religious communities and ethnic groups and between nations; it gives nations competitive advantages in the international economic race or in responding to international crises and national disasters; it can help to achieve social justice by improving distributive justice; it can foster and facilitate grassroots change and initiatives. But like the two-edged sword, it can, at its worst, destroy all these things. And religious leaders, like educational and all other community leaders, can enlarge the stock of social capital and help choreograph social and ethnic cohesion in complex societies and across the world.

Secondly, faith communities ought to be **counter-cultural** in pointing to and showing up the wrong, misguided actions and false values of government, its institutions and of individuals misguided in their lust for power, sex or whatever god. This is called the prophetic voice of faith in challenging corruption, hypocrisy and mistaken directions. We have seen this recently in the churches' opposition to gambling. Civil societies need to give to religion the social and political space to play this role since, because of their grassroots contact, faith communities are often the first to detect an emerging issue.

Thirdly, all faith communities need to be **cross-cultural**, that is, an outward orientation that is part of the universalism that is at the authentic core of all religious traditions. All local faith communities need to develop their own theologies of 'the other' and 'the different', and interrogate their traditions for attitudes such as "other religions are the work of Satan", variously expressed to me as I have travelled around Australia and interviewed religious leaders in recent months. Such negative sentiments could form the religious base for prejudice and racism. Mainstream Christians over the centuries, after much struggle, condemned the proposition, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church there is no salvation), which, in a multi-faith context could be rephrased, "Outside our own faith community, there is no heaven or resurrection or reincarnation but only hell or annihilation or a damned next existence".

All faith communities tend to be wrapped up within themselves having little contact with other different faith communities. This is particularly so where the particular community is not multicultural in composition and where religion and ethnicity are closely aligned. They can become encapsulated within their own private world. It seems to me we need to develop strategies to break these barriers and borders down, especially at the local government level. The objective must always be to defuse and provide antidotes to religious extremism and to religious encapsulation.

Particular Issues to Address

In developing strategies to facilitate inter-faith harmony and to inoculate ourselves against religious extremism, there are some issues that I feel need to be put on the table of Australian social and educational policy:

- 1. the preparation and education of local faith leaders and religious counsellors, particularly those newly arrived in Australia, regarding their English language levels and their capacity to act interculturally and be attuned to the sensitivities of a multicultural society*

Some faith communities, especially the recently arrived, do not have educational facilities for training their own clergy. Australia would be a richer community if Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic training centres could be facilitated as soon as possible. It has thus become necessary for them to import their religious personnel. Often they are poorly trained and do not understand the sensitivities of functioning

in a multi-faith community. As well, they are not fluent English speakers nor knowledgeable about Australian social and political practices, yet they immediately step into positions of influence through their preaching and counselling. They are not able to represent their community in the broader society nor learn about this society and its strengths, which is to the detriment of all.

2. *the curricula within both government and private schools regarding the knowledge of children about religion generally and about the major faith traditions, especially those with a historical heritage of tension and opposition*

Whilst there are variations across the different state government schooling systems, religion is generally not taught about in government schools which, more and more, have visioned themselves as secular rather than civic schools. Knowledge about different religious traditions has now become key knowledge in the global ecumene, and yet there is extraordinary resistance to incorporating this type of knowledge into government school curricula. Private religious schools have a different kind of problem. We now have to begin asking the following kind of questions: what do Jewish schools teach about Islam? What do Catholic schools teach about Buddhism? What do Muslim schools teach about Christianity? There needs to be much more interaction and co-operation between these types of schools, and they need to incorporate curriculum modules about inter-faith understanding into their religious education programs and have interaction with students from other faiths.

3. *the format of multi-faith services at times of national celebration or of national or international tragedy, and the form of symbols such as the use of the Christian cross and the saying of the Our Father in Parliament*

This raises the issues of symbols, and whilst Australian society has accommodated different religions reasonably well, we need imagination to resolve this set of issues which pertain to other issues such as sacred spaces in hospitals and nursing homes and the use of oaths at police graduations. The difficulty will be balancing the thinking of the 69 per cent of Australians who subscribe to Christianity, those from the minority faiths and those who are professedly agnostic or atheist. However, it is important to avoid a lowest common denomination solution which would be the desire of the secularists for this will only exacerbate the problem.

4. *the creation of mechanisms for co-operation and dialogue at local grassroots level between ethnic and religious communities that are genuinely multi-faith and aim at local community well-being*

Creating a harmonious society occurs at local level, and it is instructive that Hansonism found its greatest strength in communities with the fewest immigrants. Many initiatives have occurred since September 11th. but these need to be reinforced through formal local government support which brings together local ethnic and religious community leaders, not primarily to have a theological or spiritual

dialogue, but a multilogue (to use the phrase of Prince Hassan of Jordan) focussed on group community action.

5. *the special situation of the Australian Muslim community as results of the USA, Bali and other attacks across the world*

The Muslim communities need our special support at this dangerous time, and it cannot be guaranteed that our institutions will not let us down in the face of immense provocation. It seems to me that Islam in Australia needs to become a more united and cohesive force without ethnoreligious fiefdoms and imams self-appointing themselves to various positions. It is also important to support the moderates, and for all of us to engage with all sections of the Muslim communities in Australia. They need assistance in their public relations efforts to combat the bigoted opinions of the tabloids and the shock-jocks, and they should be encouraged to build a Muslim Institute, engaging the best international scholars to teach the authentic Islam, especially to its imams arriving from other countries, and to its people here. Now that they have more than twenty-six schools across Australia, other government and religious schools ought engage them in exchange visits, debating contests, sporting contests etc.. At the same time, they need to accept inspection of their curriculum and teaching practices to assure the broad community that anti-Christian and anti-Jewish propaganda is not infecting the minds of young Muslim Australians. It would be helpful that their mosques are developed not just as prayer halls but as local social and recreational centres in accordance with the centuries-long tradition of Islamic architecture. Lastly, it seems opportune that Australia develops a charter of religious pluralism and inter-religious interaction to ensure “fair and honourable competition”, to use the phrase of Professor Gary Bouma, between the different faiths.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the creation of civil societies, religion cannot be left to one side. There cannot be peace and harmony unless there is peace and harmony between the religions. Martyrdom, whether self or inflicted, occurs at the extremist of times. Self-martyrdom in particular is an act of despair, an act that hopelessly hopes the world will take notice of their motivations and their grievances. Memories of oppression, abuse and hatred will always come back to haunt us, even destroy us, if they are not dealt with constructively and with hope. And with vision. Never again shall we be able to look again at skyscrapers in the same way in their ambiguous symbolism of the divine and the secular. In the face of immense provocation, we must retain our nerve...and retain our hope...and be rigorous in our thinking....and be imaginative in our solutions. No one is without sin and, as Archbishop Tutu has said, there can be no future without forgiveness. And through our networks and via the internet, we can make a difference. As Hans Kung (1996), one of the driving forces behind the Parliament of the World's Religions, says, what is needed is “religiosity with a foundation but without fundamentalism; religiosity with religious identity, but without exclusivity; religiosity with certainty of truth, but without fanaticism”, a new religious cosmopolitanism. All the great religious figures of history have been

teachers - and education is at the core of the global faiths agenda. Extremists are highly selective from the faith tradition they embrace.

In Amman late in 1999, for the first time, 23 religious leaders from Bosnia-Herzegovina were brought together as a group, at least two decades, if not two centuries, too late. At the end of the colloquium, the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Orthodox Metropolitan and the Catholic Cardinal each reported that the only antidote to the radioactivity of hate in South-East Europe is that of love and peace. The Mufti spoke of the “many problems in front of us” and the difficulty of “learning how to communicate with each other”. He commented, “human blood has no nationality, no religion, no culture”. He concluded, and it is also my conclusion, “it is not a sin to go back into history but it is a sin to stay in history”.

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