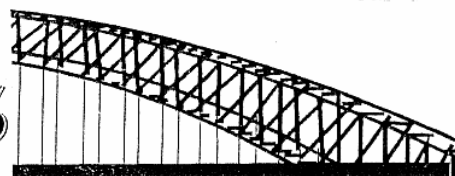




BRIDGES



A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM NETWORK

Sponsored by the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

Number 37

June 2007

EDITORIAL



From Left: Archbishop Philip Wilson (President, Conference of Australian Catholic Bishops), Mr. Jeremy Jones, Dr. Muhammad Sammak, Bishop Michael Putney (Chairman Bishops' Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue) and Archbishop Elias Chacour.

During May, Australia was visited by two extraordinary leaders in Christian-Muslim Dialogue. They were Archbishop Elias Chacour, Melkite Archbishop of Galilee and Dr. Muhammad Sammak, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Lebanon and advisor to the Mufti of Lebanon.

These two distinguished speakers and authors were invited to Sydney by the Conference of Australian Catholic Bishops to address them on *The Role of Religion in Achieving Peace in the Middle East*. The third speaker, equally well known in the Australian circles was Jeremy Jones, the past President of the Executive Council for Australian Jewry, replacing the speaker from Israel who was unable to come.

Archbishop Chacour offered himself as a living example of the possibility of peace in the Middle East, combining in himself his Arabic heritage, Israeli citizenship, Christian faith and Palestinian ancestry. As he said, "I am a Palestinian Arab Christian and a citizen of Israel". As one listened to these three leaders of the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths speak, the possibility for peace and living in harmony became more real. They outlined the necessary foundation for peace as they saw it and there was a remarkable similarity in what they said.

Some of the principles were particularly close to those that readers of Bridges would be familiar with: meeting with Muslims, Christians and Jews is preferable to studying Islam, Christianity and Judaism; sharing and acceptance are the key, not tolerance; and never put aside religious truths to please someone.

This significant gathering of 50 Muslims, 50 Christians and 50 Jews at Parliament House in Sydney, indicates the commitment of the Catholic Church in this country to educate its leaders on the importance of interfaith dialogue as a way to peace. What the outcome will be in promoting dialogue at the local level in the Dioceses of Australia remains to be seen. The foundation has been established in this country for interfaith dialogue to flourish. It has been laid largely (but not exclusively) at the grassroots level. It is now time for the leadership of the many faiths to take the opportunity given by events such as this and the visit of the Dalai Lama, to emphasis, encourage and promote interfaith relations among their followers. What a contribution this would be to peace, harmony and goodwill in this country.

Pauline Rae smsm

Church returns to Qatar after 1,400 years

For the first time in 1,400 years and after 20 years of delicate negotiations, building work has begun on a Catholic church in Qatar's capital, Doha. Dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, it will open at the end of the year for use by Qatar's Catholic community.

After 20 years of asking, permission for the building was given by Amir Hamad ben Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar. With the help of Paul Hinder, Catholic Bishop of Arabia, the work is on its way. Fr Tom Veneration will be shepherding the church for 50,000 Catholics. There are also 7,000 Anglicans and an Anglican church was built and opened last year. According to Fr Veneration, the Emir had "promoted a politics of inter-religious dialogue" but also strictly prohibits conversion from Islam. The Quatari Government reestablished ties with the Vatican in 2002, paving the way for the building of the first Catholic church since Islamic conquests in the seventh century.
Source: 'TABLET' Church in the World, April 7 2007

Christians in North Africa Key for Cultural Exchange

Pope Benedict XVI received in audience the Regional Conference of Northern African Bishops who were from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. He said, "We have an absolute need for an authentic dialogue between religions and cultures -- a dialogue capable of helping us to jointly overcome all tensions with a spirit of fruitful understanding."

North African bishops are committed to the development and deepening of relationships between Christians and Muslims, which promote reconciliation, justice and peace. Small Catholic communities live amid a majority of Muslims in Northern Africa. The Holy Father affirmed that "through the sharing of everyday life, Christians and Muslims can find the basis for a better mutual knowledge" and he added that "through a fraternal participation in each other's joys and sorrows, particularly in the most important moments of life, and also through multiple collaborative efforts in the fields of health, education, culture and service to the poor, you show an authentic solidarity that strengthens the bonds of trust and friendship among individuals, families and communities."
Source: VATICAN CITY, JUNE 12, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org))

Holy See Says Inter-religious Dialogue a Must

The Holy See told a UNESCO conference that inter-religious dialogue is a basic need for promoting peace in the world. Monsignor Francesco Follo, the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations, Scientific and Cultural Organization, said this on April 24 at the conference. Citing Benedict XVI's Aug. 20, 2005, address in Cologne, Monsignor Follo added: "Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue is a basic need. We must recognize that religions have unfortunately been factors of violence in human history and this situation risks repeating itself in new ways. Therefore, it is necessary to underline that religions have contributed, and still can, to favoring social unity, reconciliation and peace."

The Vatican representative explained that dialogue does not imply "undervaluing the differences among world religions," because they can "offer a great contribution in promoting cultural exchanges that, without hiding their differences, can serve to further justice and peace."

Source: PARIS, May 4, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org))

Pakistan legislators mull death for converts from Islam

In a move condemned by Pakistan's Catholic bishops, the South Asian country's National Assembly is considering an apostasy bill proposed by a pro-Taliban coalition of religious parties that imposes death on Muslim men who convert from Islam.

"This situation is unfortunate and sad. We demand freedom of conscience religion and expression in Pakistan, and this bill is contrary to the principle of freedom of choice," said Archbishop Lawrence John Saldanha, head of National Commission for Justice and Peace and chairman of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference, according to *AsiaNews*.

"Because international human rights charters give every individual the right to change his or her religion according to his or her conscience, we hope and pray that this bill will not be passed," Saldanha said.

The rejected bill called for an amendment of the blasphemy bill that would give equal treatment for Pakistanis of all faith. The current laws only punish those who have dishonored the Quran or Prophet Mohammad. The rejected bill called for prohibiting dishonoring the holy books of all religions. The amendment also proposed that if the accusations are found false then the accusers would be fined and imprisoned.

"The National Assembly of Pakistan has taken two steps backwards in religious freedom," said Faith McDonnell, religious liberty director at the Institute on Religion and Democracy, in a statement.

McDonnell pointed to a case of a Christian being unjustly harmed by the blasphemy law. A Christian boy was sentenced to death for writing blasphemy on the wall of a mosque. Under international pressure the boy was released but the family had to flee the country for fear of being lynched by mobs.

"Christians and other religious minorities are being roped into false cases under the blasphemy law. They are being murdered by zealots ... This law is proving to be a sword hanging on the heads of non-Muslims and secular-minded people," said All Pakistan Minorities Alliance in a statement.

Source: 'GOSPEL HERALD' Pakistan Considers Bill Condemning Muslim Converts to Death, May 15 2007

Pope Lauds Christian-Muslim Collaboration

On May 18, 2007, during the visit of the bishops of Mali Pope Benedict XVI said that the collaboration of Christians and Muslims to promote justice and peace is possible and therefore necessary. Mali has 11.5 million people, some 90% are Muslim and only 2% are Catholic.

The Holy Father expressed his "satisfaction with the fact that Catholic faithful in Mali maintain cordial relations with their Muslim compatriots." He added: "It is vital that due attention is paid to deepening your knowledge of Muslims to favor friendship and fruitful collaboration between Christians and Muslims. Then it will be possible to walk together, in a common effort for justice."

Source: VATICAN CITY, May 18, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org))

Leadership Training Programme for Young Muslims

The Programme, from May - July, has been organised by the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University and the Islamic Council of Victoria. The Strathfield Campus of Australian Catholic University drew up a programme and hosted the 20 young Muslim men and women for three days 7-9 June 2007. Sister Vivian Keely chf (Parramatta Diocese) gave the opening Address on the theme :

“Called to Exercise a Leadership Informed by Faith”. The other speakers were Nada Roude (Islamic Council of NSW) and Kaysar Trad (Islamic Friendship Association of Australia). During the three days the students engaged with university students, staff, Sydney Muslim and non-Muslim community leaders. Some of the issues addressed were Art and Culture, Australia: History and Cultures, Civic Engagement: Youth for Youth in the Wider Community and Vision and Strategies for Hopeful Leadership.

NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

Visit of the South Thai Delegation



The Thai Delegates with staff of the Columban Mission Institute

A delegation of 5 Thais (4 Muslim & 1 Buddhist) from the Province of Pattani was welcomed by ACU National's Institute for Advancing Community Engagement and Columban Mission Institute on May 14th. In a country that is predominantly Buddhist, differences in history, culture and religion have all contributed to the recent violence and instability in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, the three southern-most provinces of Thailand, where the majority of the population is Muslim.

The Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations was the venue for the gathering where the Thai visitors engaged with students and staff from the University, members of the Columban Mission Institute and two representatives of the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. Short presentations, quiet reflection and group discussion focused on the conflicts each faced in their own culture, and what hopes there were for changes and going *beyond differences*, toward a resolution of conflicts and to genuine mutual engagement.

Visitors from Indonesia

On 1 June the Centre welcomed a delegation of three men from Indonesia who were accompanied by Zubeda Rahman (Muslim Women's National Network of Australia). The staff of Christian-Muslim Relations Centre and the delegation discussed inter-religious dialogue and how it is working in both Australia and Indonesia. The delegation, who also visited Melbourne included Aan Rukmana, from Avicenna Centre for Religion and Science Studies and Deni Wahyudi K from the Central Board of Muhammadiyah Junior Youth Association.

DVD Screening – A Christian & A Muslim Making Peace

The Centre is organising a DVD screening of ***The Imam and The Pastor*** - an inspiring story two sworn-enemies who eventually worked together for peace. (See “What's Coming Up” on Page 8 for screening details).

In recent decades Nigeria has been rocked with alarming frequency by ethnic and religious conflicts which left tens of thousands killed and whole communities devastated. In the early 1990's Pastor James Wuye, a Pentecostal Minister, and Imam Muhammad Ashafa, a Muslim leader, both led armed militias in defence of their own church and mosque communities. In the pitched battles between the opposed militias Imam Ashafa lost his uncle and two cousins, and Pastor Wuye lost his arm to a machete blow. Their personal losses fuelled their hatred for each other. They became sworn enemies, even to the extent of trying to have the other killed.

Confronted by the spiralling cost of vengeance and violence, Pastor Wuye and Imam Ashafa turned respectively to the Bible and the Qur'an for answers. There they discovered commonalities between Christians and Muslims, and a message calling on them not to be warmongers but peacemakers, so they began to work for peace. In their initial encounters, each was very wary of the other, suspicion and distrust remained. But the more they came to know each other, the more their animosity waned and their mutual respect grew. It was a long journey of personal transformation, fraught with tensions and difficulties, but they persevered. They have received international recognition for their work for peace and reconciliation through non-violence conflict resolution.

The Imam and the Pastor tells how they made this remarkable transition. It is a both a moving story of forgiveness and a case study of a successful grass-roots initiative to rebuild communities torn apart by conflict.

Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye are now co-directors of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre in their city, leading task forces to resolve conflicts across Nigeria

Rev. Dr. Shane Clifton, a Pentecostal Pastor, Academic Dean and Lecturer in Theology at Southern Cross College, and Imam Afroz Ali, founder of al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development, will offer their reflections on the film and be on the panel for an open forum.

This is an amazing story. The transformation of religious terrorists into reconcilers is nothing less than a modern day miracle. Come and see. Learn what they can teach us about building a truly multi-cultural Australia.

Excerpts from Pope John Paul II's Address

In the course of these last decades, humanity has more and more taken on the features of a large village, where distances have become shorter and the network of communications more compact. The development of modern means of transportation makes it easier for people to move from one country to another, from one continent to another. Among the consequences of this significant social phenomenon is the presence of about a hundred and fifty million immigrants spread all over the different parts of the world.

This fact obliges society and the Christian community to reflect in order to be able to adequately respond to these emerging challenges, at the beginning of the new millennium, in a world where men and women of different cultures and religions are called to live shoulder to shoulder with one another.

For this living together to develop peacefully, it is indispensable to remove the barriers of diffidence, prejudice and fear that unfortunately still exist among those who belong to the different religions. In every country, dialogue and mutual tolerance are required among those who profess the religion of the majority and those who belong to minorities, often made up of immigrants, who are followers of various religions. Dialogue is the leading way to follow, and the Church invites us to walk this path in order to move from diffidence to respect, from rejection to welcome.

To reach this goal, initiatives that attract the attention of the major means of social communications are not enough. What are needed are rather everyday gestures, done with simplicity and constancy that are capable of producing an authentic change in interpersonal relationships. The vast and intense intertwining of migratory phenomena, which characterizes our times, multiplies the opportunities for inter-religious dialogues. Countries with ancient Christian roots as well as multicultural societies offer concrete opportunities for inter-religious exchange.

Dialogue is not always easy. For Christians, however, the patient and confident pursuit of it is a commitment to be constantly carried out. Counting on the grace of the Lord who enlightens minds and hearts, they remain open and welcoming towards those who profess other religions. Without ceasing to practice their own faith with conviction, they also pursue dialogue with those who are not Christians. They are well aware that to be able to authentically

dialogue with others, a clear witness of their own faith is indispensable.

This sincere effort to dialogue presupposes, on one hand, the reciprocal acceptance of difference, and sometimes even of contradictions, and also a respect for the free decisions that people make according to their own conscience. It is therefore indispensable for each one, to whatever religions he (or she) may belong, to take into account the essential requirements of freedom of religion and of conscience, as stated so well by the Ecumenical Council Vatican II (cfr *Dignitatis humanae*, 2).

I would like to express the wish that this kind of living together in solidarity may also take place in countries where the majority profess a religion different from Christianity, but where Christian immigrants live and where they unfortunately do not always enjoy a true freedom of religion and conscience.

The parish represents the space in which a true pedagogy of meeting with people of various religious convictions and cultures can be realized. In its various expressions, the parish community can become a training ground of hospitality, a place where an exchange of experiences and gifts takes place. This cannot but foster a tranquil life together, preventing the risk of tension with immigrants who bring other religious beliefs with themselves.

If there is a common will to dialogue in spite of being different, it is possible to find a ground of profitable exchange and develop a beneficial and mutual friendship that can also be translated into an effective collaboration towards common objectives in the service of common good. This is a providential opportunity, especially for metropolitan areas where there are very large numbers of immigrants belonging to different cultures and religions.

If, in the world of human mobility, everyone would be animated by this spirit, almost as in a forge, there will arise providential possibilities of a fruitful dialogue wherein the centrality of the person will never be denied. This is the only way to nourish the hope "for warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religions which have so often bloodied human history" and which have often forced many people to abandon their own countries. It is urgent to work so that the name of the one and only God may become what it is, ever more "a name of peace and summons to peace" (cfr. *Novo millennio Ineunte*, 55).

THE THIRD ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL INTERFAITH DIALOGUE, WAITANGI, NZ

The Third Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue Seminar was hosted in New Zealand from 29-31 May, 2007. The participants gathered in Waitangi to "Build Bridges". The following countries drew up this action plan:

Australia	Fiji	Myanmar	Singapore
Brunei	Indonesia	New Zealand	Thailand
Cambodia	Laos	Papua New Guinea	Timor-Leste
Darussalam	Malaysia	the Philippines	Vietnam

The Third Regional Interfaith Dialogue Action Plan

Building Bridges

- We ask that faith groups and civil society develop partnerships with each other and with governments to work for social and economic justice, minority empowerment and reconciliation among conflicting groups within society.
- We recommend that faith leaders and governments establish and facilitate faith and interfaith points of contact at the local and national levels.
- We endorse further exchanges between people (e.g. youth, students, teachers, religious leaders, academics) of different faiths, within and between countries, and at the grassroots communal levels.
- We endorse the strengthening of intra-faith dialogue and call for intra-faith dialogue sessions to become a formal part of the Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue process.
- We encourage dissemination of information about interfaith activities to address concerns about these activities in some religious communities.
- We recommend that a regional database, accessible on the internet, be established identifying the range of local, national and regional religious activities in every region, including faith and interfaith groups, faith-based organisations, charities and NGOs, and best practices of interfaith activities.
- We recommend that faith leaders and governments explore the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue network for the exchange of information about interfaith projects.
- We encourage public and private donors to expand funding for interfaith activities and community development.

Source: <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Foreign-Relations/1-Global-Issues/Security/0--Waitangi-Interfaith/0-Waitangi-Declaration.php>

Education

- We support education about religions in the public curricula of all schools, including religious schools.
- We encourage governments in the region to ensure through curriculum review that curricula meet guidelines for fairness, accuracy, and balance in discussing religious beliefs and that they do not denigrate any faith or its adherents.
- We recommend that schools should promote non-formal interfaith education such as community service, twinning projects and community immersion.
- We request interested governments to implement pilot projects in religious education to be trialled in more than one country in the region.
- We encourage religious leaders, education policy makers, and interfaith civic organizations to work together to develop consensus guidelines for teaching about religions.
- We support the inclusion of education about religions in the training of faith leaders.
- We call for support for research projects exploring any nexus between religion and conflict; perceptions of security among different faith groups; and religious education in the region.

Media

- We advocate the implementation of media literacy programmes in schools, to help develop a discerning and critical approach to news coverage about religions by media consumers.
- We call for leaders in academia, religion, politics, civil society, and culture to generate media content that help to deepen inter-cultural understanding, and promote community values.
- We call on the media to include the coverage of religion in their voluntary codes of conduct.
- We recommend journalist exchange programmes around the region.

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Email your details and request to cmr.cmi@columban.org.au



BOOK REVIEW

Chacour, Elias, and David Hazard. **Blood Brothers**. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2003 A\$23.85 [First published 1984, this book has been translated into 28 languages.]

Chacour, Elias, and Mary E. Jensen. **We Belong to the Land: The Story of a Palestinian Israeli Who Lives for Peace and Reconciliation**, *The Erma Konya Kess Lives of the Just and Virtuous Series*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001. US\$17.10

Elias Chacour is an Arab, Palestinian, Christian, Israeli citizen. These books tell the extraordinary story of his life and ministry as a Melkite priest. His family had lived in the village of Biram in Galilee 'before the Iraqi Gentile Abraham arrived twenty centuries before Christ.' In 1947 all the villagers were evicted and their homes destroyed, so Chacour grew up as a refugee amid the violence and hatred that bedevils the Middle East. He struggled to imitate his father's compassion for those who destroyed their ancestral village: "The Jews and Palestinians are brothers – blood brothers. We share the same father, Abraham, and the same God. We must never forget that."

Chacour shares about the people in his life and his feelings of love and friendship, as well as bitterness and hatred. Many times he is reduced to tears (and the reader along with him), with no one but 'the other Man from Galilee' to whom to pour out his heart. There are the feuding parishioners who refused to reconcile – he locked the whole congregation in the parish church until they either killed each other or made up! There are deep friendships with fellow priests and parishioners, which makes their later betrayal all the more painful. There is both support and misunderstanding from church authorities. There is the constant struggle with civil authorities and their efforts to dehumanize him and his people. Shining through it all is the profound faith and deep humanity of his mother and father, who taught him to trust in the one he calls 'My Compatriot, My Friend, My Champion.' It is this that sustains and guides him in his life, leading to his convictions based in the Beatitudes that violence only begets more violence; that the Palestinians need the hope of a future, and equally that the Jews need the hope of peace; and that the only way to secure these otherwise contradictory hopes is to work for justice.

Chacour studied in Nazareth and later in Paris. He was the first Palestinian to graduate from an Israeli university. He speaks eleven languages. He is in international demand to give talks on peace and non-violence. He has been awarded many prestigious peace prizes. Yet what is most impressive are the ordinary human stories of the people. Giving them a name and a face is the greatest achievement of the books, as the reader can identify with the people, their hopes, their fears, their joys, their struggles, and so challenge the stereotypes about violence and terrorism that are embedded in our minds from daily news broadcasts. One story I particularly enjoyed was when the Bishop expressly forbade Mother Superior from sending 'two' Sisters to assist in the parish – so she sent *three* Sisters! I am astonished how the little things made all the difference - the lending library of used and tattered books grew to a school, a high school, and now a university where Christians, Jews and Druze study together.

Both books cover the same basic material, but they are both eminently worth reading, for each one develops different aspects in more detail. Chacour is now the Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee. His dream for the Middle East, and for the world, is summed up as follows: "The true icon is your neighbor, the human being who has been created in the image and with the likeness of God. How beautiful it is when our eyes are transfigured and we see that our neighbour is the icon of God, and that you, and you, and I – we are all icons of God." (*We Belong to the Land*, p. 46)

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WHAT'S COMING UP

June 20

Peace Forum in Blacktown

This public forum aims to promote peace and mutual understanding among all people. Dialogue and learning foster mutual understanding and harmony. Christians and Muslim speakers will discuss how their respective traditions and teachings promote peace. The speakers are:

Kuranda Seyit (FAIR),
Silma Ihram
Chantelle Ogilvie (YCW) and
Rev Charles Rue (Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology & Justice)

Date: Wednesday 20th June 2007

Time: 7-9pm

Bowman Hall, Campbell St, Blacktown.

For more information contact Anne Lanyon on 93528021 or Susan Edwards on 98396067.

Faith Ecology Network (FEN): Three multi faith seminars.

June 12

Faith Waking up to Climate Change. The Key speaker is Dr Mark Diesendorf, UNSW Institute of Environmental Studies. Faith respondents are Ms Francis Bodkin (Dharawal), Dr Danuse Murty (Buddhist) and Prof Barry Leal (Uniting Church) and chaired by Geraldine Doogue, ABC Compass Presenter.

June 19

Our Transport. The Key speaker is Dr Chris Riedy, Research Director, UTS Institute for Sustainable futures. Faith respondents are Rev Dr Charles Rue (Catholic), Purohit Ramanujaacharya (Hindu), Rev Chris Albany & Mr Bruce Cook (Anglican). Chaired by Cate Faerhmann, Executive Director Nature Conservation Council.

June 26

Our Buildings. The Key speaker is Mr. Dick Clarke, Director of Sustainability, Building Designers Associations, NSW. Faith respondents are Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence (Jewish), Mr Afroz Ali (Muslim) and Dimity Podger (Baha'i). Chaired by Silma Ihram, Islamic Education Consultant.

All above sessions will be held at Auburn Town Hall, 1 Susan St, Auburn at 7 – 9 pm. Cost: donation at the door. For further information contact Anne Lanyon 9352 8021.

June 29

Australian Muslims: Growing together or growing apart? National Social Cohesion Public Symposium. The speakers are:

Prof Terry Lovat (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education & Arts, Newcastle University)
Prof Ghassan Hage (Chair, Dept of Anthropology, Sydney University)
Assoc Prof Greg Noble (School of Humanities & Languages, UWS),
Dr Eva Cox (Women's Electoral Lobby, Senior Lecturer, Social Enquiry, UTS),
Peter Manning (Author, TV producer, journalism Lecturer, Macquarie University),
Mehmet Ozalp (Author, President Affinity Intercultural Foundation).

Friday 29th June 2007

Time: 6.45 for 7.00pm start.

Venue: Mason Theatre, Building E7B, Macquarie University, Balaclava Rd, North Ryde.

\$15 per person on entry. For registration email info@affinity.org.au crsi.conference@scmp.aq.edu.au

July 2-5

Jews, Christians and Muslims Conference

The fourth Residential Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Australia is coming up in July. The theme is "Healing of Memories: History and Reconciliation". The four days programme includes: reflection on the theme, group sharing and discussions and the opportunity to observe or participate in prayer according to the three traditions.

Date: 2-5 July, 2007 (Monday –Thursday)

Venue: Pallotti Conference Centre,
80 McNamaras Rd, Millgrove

For more information email to

jcmavic@yahoo.com.au or phone (03) 9650 3294 or visit www.JCMA.org.au

July 8 – 12

First International Christian-Jews Conference in Australia.

The Conference jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand. The theme is "Healing a Broken World: The Faiths Working Together".

Speakers include national and international identities, MPs, Academics and people with vast knowledge and experience.

Venue: Eric Caspari Conference Centre,
University of NSW.

For more information visit www.ccjaaustralia.org

August 19

Abraham Conference

The 6th International Abraham Conference will be held on 19th August, 2007. The theme is "Our Nation: Can We Grow Together?" The Keynote Speaker is Imam Yahya Hendi, Spokesperson, Islamic Jurisprudence Council of North America.

The other speakers are Rev. Dr David Gill AM, former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia and Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, Senior Rabbi and Chief Minister Great Synagogue, Sydney. Three workshops will run concurrently in the afternoon.

Date: Sunday, 19 August, 2007

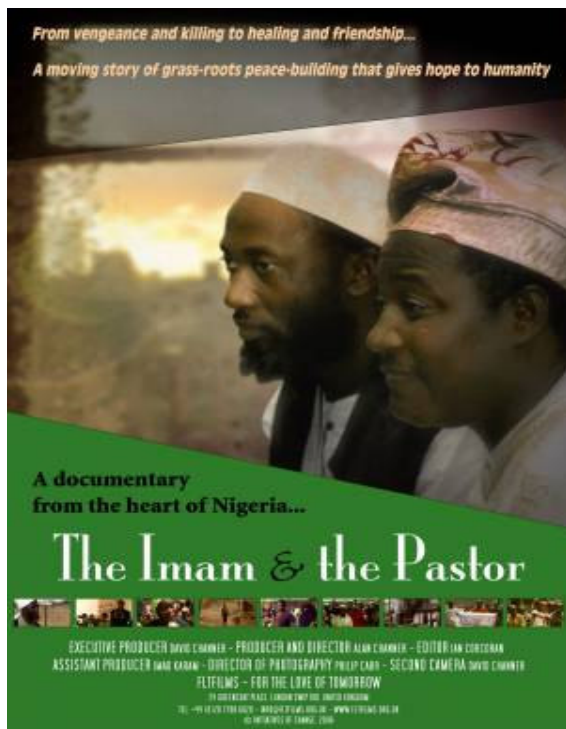
Time: 9.30 am -3.30 pm

Venue: Easter Avenue Auditorium, Sydney University

For more information contact info@affinit.org.au or visit www.affinity.org.au

If you have a group or know of upcoming events in your local area, let us know and we will include it in our future issues of *Bridges*

We often find out about events closer to the intended date, so if you would like to be notified by email of events as we find out about them, sent your request to cmr.cmi@columban.org.au



August 7

DVD: "The Imam and the Pastor"

This is an excellent documentary on the situation in Nigeria where an Imam and a Pastor are working together for reconciliation and peace. (Their story is summarized in "News From The Centre" on Page 3).

Date: Tuesday, August 7

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: CIS, 99 Albert Rd, Strathfield.

You are warmly invited to a public screening followed by response from a local Imam and a Pastor, and open forum for discussion.

For more information contact:

Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, ph 02-93528011 or email paulinerae.cmi@columban.org.au

"Beautifully shot, visually evocating.. its content is never less than thought provoking and carries potential lessons for us all." – *The Herald, Scotland.*

"It is one of the best documentaries on interfaith dialogue." – *Ottawa Sikh Society.*

MEETING POINT

Are you interested in meeting people of other faiths? Maybe even hosting a gathering?

Contact the Centre on (02) 9352 8011 or cmr.cmi@columban.org.au for assistance or more information



Some mosques are open to visitors. Try finding out where the local mosque in your area is, and see if they run guided tours. Contact the Centre if you are not sure where to look, and we'll try to help you to find one.



WIN (Women Interfaith Network)

A group of women from different faiths meet in Hurstville on the 4th Monday morning of each month. Contact Lorraine Watson on (02) 9579 2653 for further details.

A group also meets at Pyrmont one evening each month. The group is especially looking for Muslim members though all faith traditions are welcome. Contact Shehara Viswanathan on 0402 890 046 for further details.

WIN Merrylands meets at the Baha'i Centre, 107 Derby St. Silverwater on the second Monday of each month. Contact Sister Suporna Rozario on 0439 856 082 or supornarozario@yahoo.com.



'Salam Cafe' is a panel discussion/talk show type featuring a panel of young Aussie Muslims who interview people, make jokes, and talk light heartedly about issues to do with Islam - a combination of entertaining and informative.

For further information and air times, please look up the Salam Café Website: www.salamcafe.com.au.



Mission of Hope

Is a group run by volunteer professionals in the area of health (medical/mental/allied) and community development. It is a monthly discussion forum for people dealing with Muslims clients. Discuss issues surrounding Muslims in health and welfare, share professional experiences in dealing with Muslim patients/clients and develop strategies to address the needs of Muslims in Sydney to both Muslim and non-Muslim service providers.

If you are working in the profession of health and community development and would like to participate, please either email Mission of Hope info@missionofhope.org.au or contact Hanan Dover 0422 908 323 h.dover@missionofhope.org.au for more information.

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