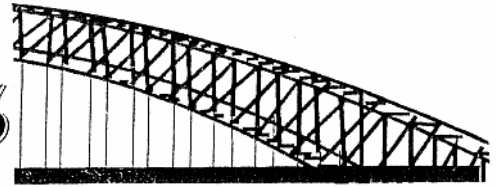


BRIDGES



A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM NETWORK

Sponsored by the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

Number 39

March 2008

EDITORIAL

People have raised the question with me many times, "Why is there so much time spent these days in dialogue, what about 'proclaiming the gospel', isn't that what we should be doing?" When Catholics ask the question there is an underlying inference that we should be trying to bring more people into the Church. This issue of *Bridges* addresses this seeming contradiction in the words of Pope Benedict XVI and in offering (in a user-friendly format), two vitally important Vatican documents which answer the question. (See page 6)

In a meeting with the clergy of the Diocese of Rome in February in response to a question from an Indian priest on this matter, Pope Benedict said:

On the one hand, dialogue, getting to know each other, respecting each other and trying to cooperate in every possible way for the great purposes of humanity, or for its great needs, to overcome fanaticisms and to create a spirit of peace and of love –all of this is absolutely necessary. And this is also in the spirit of the Gospel, whose meaning is precisely that the spirit of love that we have learned from Jesus, the peace of Jesus that he has given us through the cross, become universally present in the world. In this sense dialogue must be true dialogue, in respecting the other and in the acceptance of his alterity; but it must also be evangelical, in the sense that its fundamental purpose is to help people to live in love and to make it the case that this love expand throughout the world

But this dimension of dialogue, which is so necessary, that is, the respect of the other, of tolerance, of cooperation, does not exclude the other dimension, that is that the Gospel is a great gift, the gift of great love, of great truth, that we cannot only keep for ourselves, but that we must offer to others, considering that God gives them the necessary freedom and light to find the truth. This is the truth. And this, then, is also my road. Mission is not imposition, but an offering of the gift of God, letting his goodness enlighten people so that the gift of concrete friendship with God be extended and acquire a human face. For this reason we

want and we must always bear witness to this faith and the love that lives in our faith. We will have neglected a true human and divine duty if we have left others to their own devices and kept the faith we have only for ourselves. We would be unfaithful even to ourselves if we were not to offer this faith to the world, while always respecting the freedom of others. The presence of faith in the world is a positive element, even if no one is converted; it is a point of reference.

Exponents of non-Christian religions have told me: the presence of Christianity is a point of reference that helps us, even if we do not convert. Let us think of the great figure of Mahatma Gandhi: despite being firmly committed to his religion, for him the Sermon on the Mount was a fundamental point of reference that formed his whole life. And it seems to me that this ferment of Christian love that shows through the Gospel is.... a service that we render to humanity

It seems to me that today, seeing how history has gone, one can better understand that this presence of the word of God, that this proclamation that comes to all as a ferment, is necessary for the world to truly arrive at its purpose. In this sense, indeed we desire the conversion of all, *but let us allow the Lord to be the one who acts*. It is important that those who wish to convert have the possibility of doing so and that there appear in the world for all this light of the Lord as a point of reference and as a light that helps. **Dialogue and mission not only do not exclude each other, but the one requires the other.**

Source: Vatican City, February 18 2008 www.zenit.org

I hope you will take advantage of the two republications from the Centre, featured on *page 6*. These two small documents provide in greater detail the same position of the Catholic Church on interreligious dialogue as that stated above by Pope Benedict XVI.

Pauline Rae smsm

Christians and Muslims unite to mourn slain priest

On January 21st 2008, Christians and Muslims gathered in the Philippines to pay their respects to Fr Jesus Reynaldo Roda, 53, who was killed by suspected Islamic militants on 19th January after a botched kidnapping attempt.

Fr Roda was a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) Congregation. He was director of the Notre Dame School in Tabawan town of Tawi-Tawi province and head of the mission station there.

The whole province was in mourning. Abdul Khan, a member of the Darul Ifta (House of Opinion), said they had lost a “dear friend” and condemned the murder. He also said, “Fr Roda was well loved because he was so kind. In fact, he built a mosque for Muslim students on the Notre Dame Campus.”

Source: Cath News Jan 2008

The Chair for Study of Islam and Catholic-Muslim Relations at ACU

Australian Catholic University has appointed Dr Ismail Albayrak to the *Chair for the Study of Islam and Catholic Muslim Relations*. Dr Albayrak will be located within ACU National’s Asia-Pacific Centre for Interreligious Dialogue (APICID) at the Melbourne Campus.

The Fethullah Gulen Chair is a newly created position which aims to provide academic leadership in research, teaching and community engagement in relation to the study of Islam and has been founded with full recognition of the plurality and diversity Islam itself.

Dr Albayrak born in Ankara, Turkey, was an Associate Professor at the School of Divinity, within the Department of Basic Islamic Studies, at Sakarya University. He holds a doctorate in Qur’anic narrative from the University of Leeds, England and is the author of *Approaches to the Qur’an in Classical Modernism* (2004). Dr Albayrak will work towards promoting greater mutual understanding between Muslims and Catholics both in Australia and throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Source: Dialogue: Asia-Pacific, Issue 14, Oct-Dec 2007

Saudi’s visit to Vatican seen as good start

The Saudi Arabian King’s visit to Benedict XVI has been seen as a big step toward an improved relationship between that country and the Holy See. King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud met the Holy Father in November 2007. This was the first-ever visit of a Saudi King to a Pontiff. King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, 84 who is the custodian of the mosques of Mecca and Medina, asked to be received by the highest authority of the Catholic Church to promote in common accord religious moral values and peace in a world where religion and moral disorientation are causes of degradation, and where violence and war continue to rage.

Source: Vatican City, Nov 11, 2007, www.zenit.org

Interreligious Dialogue is working, says Scholar

Fr Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, the director of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies said recently that interreligious dialogue is bringing good fruits and should extend to daily relationships. He cited *Nostra Aetate, 1965 (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)* and explained that “the cooperation between cultural and religious groups is absolutely necessary to overcome all forms of community tension and to be able, therefore, to live in hopes of camaraderie and peace”. He affirmed the comment of Fr Maurice Borromans, a well-known promoter of Islamic-Christian dialogue who said, “in the midst of the questions and confusion generated today by the international situation regarding Islamic-Western relations, and in the midst of the uncertainties and worries of many men and women accustomed to dialogue, it is necessary on everyone’s part, Christian and Muslim alike, not to lose hope and to recover the momentum. Father Ayuso spent 20 years as a missionary in Egypt and Sudan. From his own experience he affirmed that the Christian-Muslim dialogue continues in spite of difficulties and obstacles. According to him, “we need a common platform to develop interreligious relationships in daily life, in interreligious cooperation and in theological reflection, as well as in a spiritual encounter. Our times, ever more globalized every day, urgently need harmonious dealings that promote religious freedom, healthy reciprocity and the promotion of peace”.

Source: Rome, Nov 14, 2007, www.zenit.org

Pope and Muslims closer to meeting

Dialogue between Pope Benedict and Islamic scholars is one step closer as a meeting between the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Islamic representatives is set to take place in March. A meeting will take place with the Pontifical Council and a group of Islamic scholars on the 3rd March. In October, 138 Muslim scholars sent a letter “A Common Word” to all major Christian leaders. Pope Benedict XVI responded in November by inviting a group of Muslim scholars to meet with and to hold a broader session with the Vatican. There will be five of the 138 scholars who will participate in the March meeting to prepare for the larger gathering.

Source: Cath News 8/02/08

Iraqi Christians Not Losing Hope

The three kidnapped Christians in Iraq were prepared to die for their faith before converting to Islam which shows that the faithful are not losing hope in Iraq despite persecution. Recently 40 students who were travelling on a road to Baghdad were kidnapped by terrorists. The group was ordered to convert to Islam. The three Christian students strongly refused, saying they were prepared to die for their faith. The Archbishop Louis Sako (Iraq) said, “despite so many difficulties, our devotees are not losing faith or hope, they are actually strengthening them”. Commenting on the reconciliation between Muslims and Christians, Archbishop Sako said: “Even during Lent, our Islamic brothers come to see us, but it takes time to promote initiatives and we have to learn”.

Source: Rome, Feb 12, 2008, www.zenit.org

A Common Word Between Us and You

In October 2007, one hundred and thirty eight Muslim scholars from more than forty countries were signatories to a letter to Christian leaders everywhere entitled *A Common Word Between Us and You*. Since that time others have added their names so that the total number of signatories is now well over two hundred. The letter is an invitation to look together at the *Common Word* shared by Christians and Muslims. For the first time in centuries Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals have come together to declare the common ground between Christianity and Islam.

The signatories to this message come from every denomination and school of thought in Islam. Every major Islamic country or region in the world is represented in this message which is addressed to all the world's churches, and to all Christians everywhere. Never before have Muslims delivered this kind of definitive consensus statement on Christianity.

A Common Word has been warmly welcomed by Christians around the world and particularly by interfaith organizations such as this Centre. It can provide a common basis for dialogue in a wide variety of situations ranging from the scholarly and academic to small groups in parishes and mosques. For this reason the Centre is preparing to publish the document in both English and Arabic for the widest possible distribution.

Lists of the signatories, recipients and new signatories, Christian and Jewish Responses, media resources, downloads in several languages, and other details are available on the dedicated website at <http://www.acommonword.com>

Asia-Pacific Interfaith Symposium

The Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University (Nathan Campus), Brisbane, hosted an Asia-Pacific Interfaith Symposium from February 23-25, 2008. The theme for the symposium was "Women, Faith and a Culture of Peace". It was organized jointly by the Multi-faith Centre, Griffith University and the "Believing Women for a Culture of Peace" (an interfaith women's organisation). There were over 150 participants from different faith traditions and cultures, and from 12 countries including Australia. The symposium began with the Aboriginal welcome and multi-faith prayer and ended with the multi-faith prayer. The welcome address was given by Michael Choi MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Prof. Toh Swee-Hin, Director of the Multi-faith Centre, Griffith University.

The two day symposium was structured around four panels and about twenty-eight workshops. The panel titles were:

- Women in interfaith: Initiatives, challenges and success
- Affirming human rights and transcending conflicts: where can faith take us?
- Just compassionate and sustainable Earth communities: Faith and interfaith contributions
- Gathering the wisdom, charting the future.

The panelists were women (both local and overseas) highly involved in women's issues, interfaith activities and empowerment of women.

Some of the 28 workshops were on topics such as Australia – a country of destination for Trafficked Persons!; Christian-Muslim Relations; The negative effects of religious extremism on interfaith harmony and how to combat it; The Islamic path of Sufism as a basis of social justice; The National Sorry Day Committee Campaign; Women, faith and racism in Mass Media; Women and Spirituality in Islam; women and Fundamentalism in Islam and Catholicism; Interfaith relations in multicultural societies etc.

Sr Suporna Rozario from the Centre attended the symposium and gave a workshop on "Christian-Muslim Relations" which was well received. She was pleased to share the Centre's work with the whole symposium. The participants were very passionate about women's rights and building a culture of peace from the faith perspective. They wish to promote a faith-based women's voice in the political arena, in government generally. The symposium was affirming and encouraging for participants in their respective areas of work for the empowerment of women. The participants were pleased with the outcome and proposed to continue the symposium at least every two years.

Re-Publication of Documents

Columban Mission Institute is making available two documents of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue for the wider readership they deserve. We hope that prayerful study and implementation of the teaching in these documents will lead to deepening and broadening the already fruitful exchanges between peoples of different religions. See p.6 for details.

(The following article was originally written for, and published in, *Terra Spiritus* www.terraspiritus.com.au, an Australian Spirituality magazine by the Daughter of St Paul)

It looks odd to see Christian and Muslim spiritualities named together, let alone suggest that they engage with each other, to the mutual benefit of both. Much of the histories of these two traditions have been marked by mutual hostility – over territorial conflicts or the contested allegiances of populations.

However, there have also been long eras of peaceful coexistence between the members of these two religions, and even remarkable collaboration, most notably the Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars in ninth century Baghdad's *Bait al-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom) who translated the classical works of Chinese, Greek, Indian, and Latin learning into Arabic. This harmony is also evident in the multi-faith collaboration in Toledo and Sicily from the tenth to the thirteen centuries which led to the translation of the highly developed Arabic heritage into Latin.

This infusion of learning contributed, in turn, to the Renaissance in Europe from the fourteenth century onwards, and so indirectly to the seventeenth century Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the technological revolution of modern science and scholarship. So the modern world owes much to this ancient collaboration between Jews, Christians and Muslims, a debt too often unacknowledged.

However, these ancient exchanges were mostly to do with knowledge, science and technology, and had little to do with spirituality. No wonder the conjunction of Christian and Muslim spiritualities looks strange! Yet perhaps that very strangeness provides a new way of

looking at our respective traditions. Perhaps our very differences in spirituality can help both of us get out of the impasses in which we have become stuck.

From the very beginning, the Christian movement was outside the centres of power. Jesus began his public ministry in first century Galilee, a rural backwater of Palestine, which in turn was an occupied territory on the edges of the far-flung Roman Empire. After a brief surge of popularity which he rode into the city, Jesus was condemned by the religious and imperial powers and executed "outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:11, 13).

Although Islam began outside the imperial domains of Rome and Persia, and the first Muslims were persecuted and harshly treated in their own polytheist society, during the lifetime of the Prophet Islam became an ascendant power in its own right, soon to eclipse Persia and challenge Rome

Moreover, by default, Muhammad was both a political and religious leader. As a result, Islam was, and continues to be, *dīn wa dawla* ("religion and state"), and there is no separation between the secular and the sacred.

All is a stage for religious concern and nothing is exempt from religious direction.

As a result of these different origins, Christian spirituality may be characterised as coming from inward and flowing outwards. The classic example is Jesus himself, who did not rely on external sources but used his own personal authority to interpret and apply the religious law: "You have heard that it was said..." (Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43), which he boldly countered with "*but I say to you ...*" (Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). Also, "the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." (Matthew 7:28-29).

By contrast, Muslim spirituality may be characterised as coming from outwards and flowing inwards. Questions about behaviour are first referred to the primary authorities, both of which are external to the person. The Muslim authorities first ask "what does the Qur'an say?", "what does the Sunnah say?", and if no ready answer is found in those sources only then do they apply reasoning to come up with analogy (*qiyās*) or personal interpretation (*ijtihād*).

Of course, these characterisations of "inner" and "outer" are not hard and fast. They are rather emphases, caricatures which represent a truth but are not the whole truth. The spiritualities of Christianity and Islam both have inward and outward dimensions. However, because these emphases are fluid, they were more pronounced at different times in history in the spirituality of one religion or the other.

In the first centuries, the followers of "the Way" (Acts 9:2) were a subversive movement. They shared with other Jews, and then with Gentiles, the startling Good News of God's saving love made known in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and so transformed individuals and societies from within. However, after Constantine's conversion that inner evangelical dynamism became intertwined with imperial power such that ecclesial and imperial interests coincided. The expansion of the empire was *ipso facto* the expansion of the church and vice versa. Although the mixing of powers was directly contradictory to Jesus' injunction, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25), this experiment in combining religious and imperial rule was to continue for much of the next seventeen centuries.

In this imperial setting, it became inevitable that Christendom's meeting with the expansion of Islamic rule, which burst out of the Arabian peninsula from the seventh century onwards, could only be experienced as 'a clash of civilisations'. Though there were many long exceptions, for example, the protected status of Christian and Jewish populations under Islamic rule in the Middle East, Persia, and North Africa that was variously observed at different times and different places; the relatively peaceful co-existence in Palestine from the seventh to the tenth centuries; and *La*

Convivencia “the Coexistence”) in Spain from 711 to 1492.

Christendom was actually to suffer a more significant blow from civil war within its own territories than that which periodically irritated its borders. The protracted and vicious Wars of Religion during the sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformation in ‘Christian’ Europe scandalised the population. Weary and wary of the trials to which the emotionalism of religious passions had subjected them, their leaders sought refuge in dispassionate reason. While ideally the separation of religion and state emancipated both to claim their own proper autonomy, in fact it had the negative side effect that in the modern world Christianity has by and large become privatised. Religion is considered a purely private matter, a personal opinion, an emotional stance, not a rational one, and therefore generally sidelined.

Paradoxically – or perhaps more accurately, providentially – in this situation the contrast between Christian and Muslims spiritualities appears now as a blessing. Whereas Christians reacting to the excesses of outward religious expression have become overly privatised, the witness of the public role of Islam and the refusal of Muslims to convert or to conform to standards that are alien to their own religious convictions encourages Christians to reclaim their own Christian responsibility in the public domain.

Muslims can become so concerned about the external observance of religious norms that they fail to heed the more inward demands. Christians following Christ’s teaching: “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27) can help restore a more balanced perspective that both honours outward religious purpose and respects creative human freedom and responsibility.

Christians can be tempted to set their religious identity aside when pursuing supposedly ‘secular’ aims like working for peace, justice, human rights and ecology. In our very secular society, the Muslim observance of dress, food, and other religious obligations is counter-cultural. It witnesses to the demands of faith in everyday living, and challenges Christians to be equally open and public in bringing their faith convictions to bear on their social involvements.

While Muslim majority populations have, by and large, not (yet) undergone the trauma of the Enlightenment and the Reformation, the globalisation of communications has embroiled them in its aftershocks. When Muslims react to the toxicity of radically secularist ideologies, the witness of Christians living their faith with serenity in a secular setting, and bearing with understanding and compassion the blows of a people floundering in the crisis of transition from the traditional to the modern world, can help restore a sense of calm and balance that favours the necessary distinction and collaboration between secular and religious powers.

Thus, the inner and outer dimensions of Christian and Muslim spiritualities seem to offer each other an antidote to the impasses in which our traditions have historically become trapped. May we honour the hurts that we have inflicted on each other over the centuries and in the present by hearing and responding to the legitimate grievances of minorities, by forgiving each other, and by making just reparation. May we not live out of that woundedness, real, perceived or proxy, but rise to the challenge of learning from and contributing to each other so we each become better servants of the coming kingdom of God.

Father Patrick McInerney

A MUSLIM MESSAGE OF THANKS AND OF CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS, DEC 2007

Muslim scholars have for the first time sent a joint message to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders with Christmas greetings to Christians around the globe.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. May God Muhammad and his kin and bless Abraham and his kin.

Al-Sallamu Aleikum; Peace be upon you; Pax Vobiscum.

Peace be upon Jesus Christ who says; Peace is upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am resurrected (Chapter of Mary; the Holy Qur’an; 19:34). During these joyful holidays we write to you, our Christian neighbours all over the world, to express our thanks for the beautiful and gracious responses that we Muslims have been receiving from the very first day we issued our invitation to come together to “A Common Word” based on “Love of God and Love of Neighbour” (see www.acommonword.com – for the document and the responses).

We thank you and wish you all a joyous and peaceful Christmas Holiday Season commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, may peace be upon him.

We Muslims bear witness that: There is no god but God, without associate, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, and that Jesus is His Servant, His Messenger, His Word cast to Mary, and a Spirit from Him..... (Sahih Bukhari, Kitab Ahadith al Anbiya’).

We pray, during these blessed days, which have coincided with the Muslim feast of the Hajj or Pilgrimage, which commemorates the faith of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), that the New Year may bring healing and peace to our suffering world. God’s refusal to let Abraham (peace be upon him) sacrifice his son-granting him instead a ram – is to this day a Divine warrant and most powerful social lesson for all the followers of the Abrahamic faiths, to ever do their utmost to save, uphold and treasure every single human life an especially the life of every single child. Indeed, it is worthy of note that this year Muslim scholars issued a historic declaration affirming that sanctity of human life – of every human life - as an essential and foundational

teaching in Islam upon which all Muslim scholars are in unanimous agreement (see details at www.duaatalislam.com).

May the coming year be one in which that sanctity and dignity of human life is upheld by all. May it be a year of humble repentance before God, and mutual forgiveness within and between communities.

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.

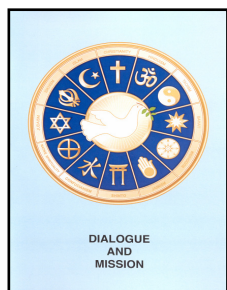
(Names of the signatories can be seen at www.acommonword.com)

Source: December 31, 2007, Zenit News

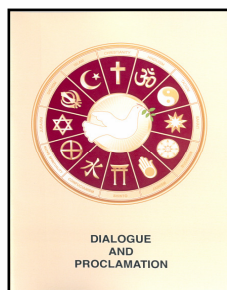
BOOK REVIEW

DOCUMENTS OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

God, in an age-long dialogue, has offered and continues to offer salvation to humankind. In faithfulness to the divine initiative, the Church too must enter into a dialogue of salvation with all men and women. (DP, 38)



The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflection and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission was published 20 years after the foundation of what is now known as the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue*. Reflecting on those many years of experience in building understanding between believers from other religions, the document answers questions that have arisen about the compatibility of dialogue and mission and offers pastoral guidance to those promoting interreligious relations. It names the various tasks that make up the contemporary Church's mission; explains the foundations and forms of dialogue; and treats of the mutual relations between dialogue and mission.



Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes 25 years after Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. It is the fruit of 5-years of collaboration between the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* and the *Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*. It is the most sustained and profound reflection on interreligious dialogue in Catholic teaching. It presents dialogue as an integral part of the Church's mission, related to but not interchangeable with proclamation. The document presents the difficulties as well as the opportunities that dialogue and proclamation together offer in service of the Church and the growth of the Kingdom of God.

Together these two magisterial documents show the development and growth in the Catholic Church's understanding of interreligious dialogue. Although published more than 20 years ago, both documents retain a freshness and a penetrating insight that continues to be relevant to the interreligious issues facing society today.

The Columban Mission Institute is privileged to make these documents available to a new readership at the minimal cost of **\$2.00** only for *Dialogue and Mission* (p. 20) and **\$3.00** for *Dialogue and Proclamation* (p. 41) plus postage and handling. We pray that prayerful study and implementation of the teaching in these documents will lead to deepening and broadening the already fruitful exchanges between peoples of different religions.

For order please contact:

Columban Mission Institute, Phone: + 61 2 9352 8000
c/- Australian Catholic University, Fax : + 61 2 9746 8033
Locked Bag 2002 Email: cmi@columban.org.au
Strathfield NSW 2135 Website www.columban.org.au

WHAT'S COMING UP

March

14 **Be Global Citizens: Promote the Common Good Regionally and Globally**

Time: 8.00- 9.15 am

Venue: Gleeson Auditorium, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield
25A Barker Road, Strathfield 2135

Speaker: Dr Kamran Mofid, Founder of Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative and Co-founder/Editor, Journal of Globalisation for the Common Good. (He is a world leader in the economics of the common good, spiritual economics and non-violent conflict resolution and an interfaith perspective on globalisation).

RSVP: By 12 March. Email: iace@acu.edu.au

For more info contact:

Helen McLucas (02) 9701 4176

14 **Globalisation: War, Religion, & Dialogue**

Venue: University of Western Sydney,
Bankstown Campus, Lecture Theatre 4
Building 23, Bullecourt Ave Milperra.

Cost: \$5 per person on entry

Reg: ph (02) 9702 0789 or email:

registration@affinity.org.au

Speakers: Dr Kamran Mofid, Founder, Globalisation for the Common Good Initiatives; Dr Mary Hawkins, School of Social Science UWS, (Author of "Global Structures, Local Culture"); Mehmet Ozalp, Co-founder of Affinity Intercultural Foundation (Author of "101 Questions You Asked About Islam" and "Islam in the Modern World").

15 **Conference: Why the Prophet appeared at the time he did and the Impact of his life and teaching.**

Time: 5.30 pm for start 5.45 pm

Venue: Redgum Function Centre
2 Lane St, Wentworthville

Cost: \$5 donation

(Dinner & Refreshments provided)

Speakers: Sheikh Naeem Abdul Wali, Givanna Volpe and Dr Mohsen Labban.

For info contact Australia Forum INC

16 **Public Celebration: Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday**

At Vedanta Hall, 15 Liverpool Rd, Croydon at 10.30 am

For info ph (02) 9745 4320,

Email vedantasyd@idx.com.au

16 **Palm Sunday Rally & March for Peace**

1.30 pm - Multi-Faith Prayers for Peace

Amphitheatre Parramatta Town Hall

2.10 pm -March through Parramatta - Rally.

April – July 3-month intensive- **Leadership Training Programme for Young Muslims** (age 16-33). The course is spread over a number of evenings, weekends and weekdays. It is organized by the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe

University and Islamic Council of Victoria with support of the Government of Victoria. The course will include workshops, seminars and lectures; field trips; use of audio-visual material; debates and role play; interviews with guests; a workbook of reading materials and exercises and short assignments.

Applications close 14 March 2008

For more information contact Heba Ibrahim Ph (02) 9328 2067 email admin@icv.org.au or visit www.latrobe.edu.au/dialogue

April

8 **Interfaith Symposium – “Women, Religion & Peace”**

Time: 12.00-3.00 pm,

Cost: \$15 per person

Venue: Theatre, NSW Parliament House

For more information phone 02 9520 9409

www.watac.net email watac@watac.net

14 **Peace Forum – “Growing Peace in Sydney”.**

A Peace Forum put on by Sydney City Council; the Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice and the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations.

Time: 6.30pm for 7.00pm Start

Venue: Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts
280 Pitt St, Sydney 2000.

Speakers: Silma Irham, Afroz Ali, Chantelle Ogilivie, Fr Charles Rue

For info phone Anne Lanyon 9352 8021.

May

18 **Peace Forum – “Growing Peace in Canterbury**

A Peace Forum put on by Canterbury Council, the Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice and the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations.

For Info call Anne Lanyon (02) 9352 8021.

21 **The Sydney segment of the Leadership Training Programme for Young Muslims**

will be held in Sydney from **May 21-24**. It will be hosted by the Institute for Advancing Community Engagement, ACU Strathfield. The Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations of Columban Mission Institute will also take part.

For more information contact

Helen McLucas (02) 9701 4176

Email: iace@acu.edu.au or

Pauline Rae (02) 9352 8011

Email: cmr.cmi@columban.org.au

25 **Buddha's Birthday**

A celebration will be held at Vedanta Hall, 15 Liverpool Rd, Croydon at 10.40 am. The programme includes Hari Om Ramakrishna Chant, silent Meditation and talks by Rev Pravrajika Ajayaprana and Venerable Chokyi (Buddhist guest speaker). (Buddha's actual birthday is on May 20)

For info ph (02) 9745 4320,

Email: vedantasyd@idx.com.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*

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. 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, and Silverwater on the first 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 Muslim 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. It is suited 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.



Help us spread the news about the Centre and BRIDGES and send us the name and address of
someone else whom you think may be interested. (Please complete details below)



There are no subscription fees for BRIDGES, but a kind donation would be appreciated
as it would help with the cost of production

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



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(Please send us your contact details)



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Postal address: Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations
Columban Mission Institute
C/- Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 2002
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