'Apocalypse Hippodrome'
Cultural Diversity, Religion and the Modern State

Plenary Address 1, 1:30pm, Sunday 31st October 1999
The Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference, London

I want to begin with an extract from a poem by Geoffrey Hill from his collection *Canaan*. It is called *Mysticism and Democracy* and ends with the following words:

> "The obscurities through which you have armed his way, night
> marches, down-draughts of coal smoke, many-chambered,
> fog-lit from within, become to hurled applause: the Veil of the
> Nations, the Final Transformation-Scene-and-Curtain, Apocalypse
> Hippodrome!"
>
> *Mysticism and Democracy*
> From *Canaan* by Geoffrey Hill p.14

The complexity and fluidity of any concept of 'culture' today make it a very slippery word indeed. To fit 'culture' into a straightjacket of ethnicity, or nationalism, or some sort of political fancy dress, is to miss the mark by a big margin. There are, indeed, hierarchies of cultures, each with different levels of demand – we are conscious of talking in an offhand way about work cultures, business cultures, social expressions of culture. We are more conscious, certainly, of ethnic cultures, of Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Melanesian and White Greek or Anglo-Australian and all those other hyphenated Australian and the Aboriginal cultures, but even these have their own intrinsic sub-cultures – youth, gender, age, upper, middle, lower, literate and peasant cultures. We have a hierarchy of sport cultures – football, cricket, wrestling, baseball, and even within that range, football can cover another layer of cultures – soccer, rugby, Australian Rules, American. Paulo Freire made powerful use of his 'Culture of Silence' to write about the illiterate in Brazil, and today we are all probably most dominated by the culture of money.

There are prison cultures, which films like *Cool Hand Luke, The Shawshank Redemption* and lately *Life, Life* vividly portray. Gangster cultures are well known, so we can applaud a reprise of *The Godfather* in *Analyse This*. Travel, art, films, drama, opera, musicals, ballet, each have the legitimacy of culture.

Within such a plethora of cultural styles and cultural norms, is there any one differentiating and convincing essence which we know as cultural? Thus, we can speak of cultural diversity, not simply as the efflorescence of some ethnic or racial identity to which religion can relate, but rather as a seething cauldron of cultural variety in which religion is but a dash of seasoning, part of the whole, not standing over against a reality called 'culture'.

The modern state has equally to take account of the diversities and complexities of such an array of cultural phenomena. Yet what do we mean by the modern state? In the twilight of the twentieth century, we must reluctantly accept that Hitler and Stalin invented the paraphernalia of vicious statal systems – extermination, mass deportations and mass executions – which, sadly, not only existed in their realms of

power, but also found diminished parallels in the 'twenties and 'thirties in other brutal systems, even in Australia with its assimilation project and the "stolen generation". Such systematic violence lingers on in the late twentieth century discovered in secret police, torture, 'transmigrati', genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism and journalistically driven xenophobia. The modern state is not a thing of beauty.

And it faces more dilemmas in a post-modern world. Globalisation is yet to be wholly understood, but it clearly creates fresh focal points of power in trans-national companies which flourish behind what Professor John Hall has called "the money curtain". Also the great metropolitan money centres, at the same time, further marginalise the poor and the rural. Loss of sovereignty is a consequence of this new imperial force. The discovery of culturally diverse realities within the boundaries of post-colonial frontiers brings the current stock of democratic administrative and economic values and traditions into question. Even the race for so-called 'modernisation' can actually be a retrograde step, damaging the institutions of what remains of civil society.

Possibly the greatest threat within the modern state is the process of de-institutionalisation, which brings with it a loss of stability. Those institutions, including the press, which became the talisman of the Enlightenment, and subsequently the stuff of 'freedoms' for nineteenth century liberalism and the United Nations Charter, and which helped to give the modern state its problems and its vigour (of which religion, in whatever form, is one), may need to discover unexpected and fresh roles. One of those roles may well be how the modern state relates to our cultural diversity.

A former colleague of mine drew my attention to the writing of Homi Bhabha – especially his *Location of Culture* and Robert Youngs' *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. Hybridity in the context of post-colonial literature is the recapturing of a nineteenth century anthropological word which, in this latest trend, is given a fresh spin which allows it to be almost re-coined to give value to a discourse on literature and civilisation in a post Frantz Fanon world. But I want to use it as a tool to explain what for me is the most natural of present-day phenomena: the way in which each one of us presents a blend and mixing from a truly multicultural basket of experiences, which is the presenting reality of who we are and what we may become.

Such cultural hybrids will carry a characteristic stem, and it is identifying this stem which may indeed offer the greatest perplexity. Who am I? Perhaps simply a white, male, Australian, framed in a cocktail of Anglican experiences in Sydney, Mirfield, New York, and overlaid with an ecumenical culture from Geneva, now captured in the curious culture of a cathedral. Yet that is not good enough. The 'who am I?' asks more than a superficial question. It asks about a search for roots which goes further than the history which each one of us carries as our own peculiar baggage. It asks where our innermost life is; where we find our centre; what we are to be. And that asks what the central, core stem of our person is – what makes us as we are.

But to that stem is grafted, successfully or less so, this curious range of various cultural 'twigs' which make us more clearly what we are *seen* to be. The ethnic stem may be deemed for some to be the root, but for others it may be a less easily

identifiable core; indeed, it may, in a post-colonial sense, already be a generously genetically modified hybrid!

Now the question for me is whether religion itself can be such a stem? Or is it a 'stand-alone' pure stock which can be seen and identified as separate from and singularly adorned in the garden of multiculturalism. I doubt it. But there could be another realm, another function, another place for religion in this fluid and complex situation. For religion has, from time to time, emerged, dare I say it, like a weed, to contradict spectacularly with the groomed hybridity of a culturally diverse garden. It has done this in its aspect of a counter-culture – which, I daresay, is eventually grafted into the general system of things. But I think it is these flashes of counter-cultural vitality which give religion a peculiar place and an interesting role in the general development of the culturally diverse modern state. Let me give some examples.

First, I suppose primitive Christianity, that hybrid of Jewish and Hellenistic elements nurtured so successfully by Paul the Apostle, is a classic instance of a counter-culture emerging slowly and painfully to become the dominant religion of the post-Nicea Roman world. This is itself a complex story, but the way in which the Christian communities were shaped in those first three centuries remains a powerful example of how, in the culturally diverse world of the Roman Empire, a religious shift took place which changed irrevocably that western world, which, despite its subsequent shudders and upsets, established for a time a homogeneity of culture which later became one of the fixed nodes, indeed, established the very stuff of colonialism, against which so much has lately been written. This tool of 'hybridity' lets one off the hook as far as the accusation of syncretism, so often made about churches in the 'fifties and 'sixties. Syncretism suggests something which is unmanaged; hybridity, I think, refers to something which is controlled. In a similar way, Islam emerged later in the 8th century CE as itself a counter-culture within the post-Roman world, and is today one of the dominant cultural norms in a world of globalised economies and slippery cultures.

Yet the curious thing is how a succession of 'modern', so far as contemporeity allows, states, adopted religion – or, to put it another way, religion colluded with the state of its time, to give us legal and juridical and economic systems, coupled with the expansionism of the European world, to arrive at the beginnings of the modern state by the sixteenth century. Indeed from the Spanish conquistadors to the ownership of the Congo by Leopold of Belgium, with the menacing mercenary slave trade in between, those 'modern states' set the framework for our post-colonial world.

Secondly, let me take a more recent model. The inextricably mixed culture of church and state which marked the apogee of the Tsarist Empire seemed to be broken down irrevocably by the Marxist-Lennist revolutions and the succeeding Stalinist culture of the 1930s and 1940s. But I well remember a colleague of mine in Genvea, Archpriest Vitaly Borovoi, who was later Dean of Moscow, telling us the importance of the candle-burners inside the Soviet society of the 'fifties, 'sixties and 'seventies; that Orthodoxy remained in the hearts and minds of the older generation and prophesied a surprising turn of events when that particular regime, (like, I suppose, that of Ivan the Terrible or other demonic Tsars) had passed, and the culture of the grandmothers flourished again. Such a counter-culture within the framework of a dominant and hostile culture did survive, has emerged and is today acting not unlike it did at the end

of the nineteenth century. So a counter-culture is not necessarily the articulation of something new and fresh; it can indeed represent the survival of something older and more nostalgic. To understand some of the horrific events of the last five years in former Yugoslavia, and things unfolding in the post-Kosovo analysis, required attention to such forces in religion which bind together old dreams to give them new hopes in, sometimes, an alarming way.

Thirdly, let me take you to Africa, where today the largest numbers of Christians are probably to be found. Not necessarily belonging to the historic churches, the churches of colonial domination, which, however, are nevertheless growing and vigorous churches, but rather to the African independent churches, themselves ecclesial hybrids of a different order and kind altogether. The generalities about the many thousands of different independent churches have been published in a number of books, and I enjoyed editing a small journal which addressed some of these issues. But in 1980 I visited the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu in Zaire. Here was an altogether fascinating phenomenon. For out of the seed of Presbyterian mission and Catholic hierarchy had arisen a catechist whose teaching was seen as a threat by the Belgian colonial authorities. Simon Kimbangu was saved from execution to spend the remainder of his life in prison. In 1980 there was a temple dedicated by his followers, then estimated at 5 million, where his tomb was kept with freshness and care. A church had arisen, whose membership of the World Council of Churches in the 1970s was the subject of much discussion. In the context of this argument, though, I cite the example of a case in which a religious movement had effectively become a counter-culture not only within the constraints of Belgian colonialism, but, successively, within the context of Motubu's Zaire. Again a hybrid phenomenon which today may well have been grafted into the new establishment of the Congo Republic.

Yet where is this argument leading? Yes, we can admit the flux of cultural diversity and see it in its variety, fluidity and slipperiness. Certainly it can be seen that religion, *qua* religion, is part of that flux, embedded into the stock of main cultures, itself part of that hybridisation. We can recognise how from time to time religion may emerge with a counter-cultural thrust, to challenge the dominance of one or another prevailing stock emerging out of the manifestly generous possibilities of cultural diversity. We can admit the collusion of religion in the establishment of a succession of 'modern states', or else its effect on states as an element in the counter-cultural challenges made within states. However, we need to see that religionists themselves believe passionately that only the religion of the 'true believer' can make its valid contribution to the prevailing confusion of cultural diversity and the development of the post-modern state. But there is a conundrum!

For within the culture of contemporary religion today there is a counter-culture of huge significance, affecting particularly the ecumenical stock of Christianity – the historic churches in their many manifestations, as well as the equally fluid and as widespread religion of Islam. That internal counter-culture is journalistically known as 'fundamentalism'. Much has been written about it, and it takes different shapes in different contexts. Within Anglicanism I suppose it is more commonly seen as a vital evangelicalism. Be that as it may, 'fundamentalism' begins to shape the way churches and faiths express themselves in the diversities of cultures of our times.

Some indeed take on a wholly millenniaristic approach and foresee doom as the orderly end for our times.

There is, indeed, an Apocalyptic feel about some fundamentalism, and it is troubling to see how unsympathetic this kind of religion can be to the diversity and ambiguity which we accept so easily in the concept of cultural diversity, together with the shaping of the structures in a modern state. Thus that liberal, *laissez-faire*, somewhat relaxed and spiritually sophisticated feel for religion which is, more than likely, the blossoming 'rose' of the 1960s and 1970s hybridisation, seems ready for the pruner's hook. Perhaps we really are on the edge of what Geoffrey Hill's poem so brilliantly called *'The Apocalypse Hippodrome'*.

For religion, stultified by the forces of its own internal counter-culture, will play less and less well the critical role it might have face to face with the cultural diversity of our time, and risk collapsing into a mystifying and destructive battle between holders of the main tradition and radicals of fundamentalism. That would be a great loss to the richness and beauty and vitality of today's multicultural conversation, and the struggle globally by the post-colonial state to grapple with the virtues and vices of its own inherited system. But I think we can happily rely on one thing. If religion is a weed, it will poke up again, like ground elder, and remain a contradiction to a graceful, culturally diverse society of the future, and perhaps a challenge to the tools of coercion in the post-modern state.

Canon Rex Davis
The Subdeanery, Lincoln, UK

Religious Discrimination and Racism

Plenary Address 2, 1:30pm, Sunday 31st October 1999
The Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference, London

Thank you Hass for that introduction and good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that I have accepted this invitation to speak to you today on behalf of the Commission for Racial Equality on the theme of religious discrimination and racism, and it is from that perspective that my remarks this afternoon will be directed.

The Commission for Racial Equality or (CRE for short) welcomes the focus brought to the issues of religious and cultural diversity by the work of the Australian Multi-cultural Foundation. We are very pleased to be part of this second conference on Religion and Cultural Diversity, not least because (as you will be aware) in March next year the CRE is combining with the Foundation to hold the "Global Cultural Diversity, Congress 2000" in Cardiff. Diane Morley, the Executive Director of that Congress, is here with us today to gather some ideas.

BACKGROUND

First, a little background on the CRE. It was set up under the 1976 Race Relations Act. It receives an annual grant from the Home Office, but works independently of the Government. We are pleased to enjoy support from all the main political parties in Britain, and we work with a wide variety of organisations throughout the British Mainland. Our jurisdiction does not extend to Northern Ireland where there is separate legislation and enforcement agencies. I will refer to the Northern Ireland legislation later in my speech.

The CRE is run by 15 Commissioners appointed by the Home Secretary. Sir Herman Ouseley, our chairman, who could not attend today, sends his best wishes. I am one of two part-time Deputy Chairmen. We help to fund 93 Racial Equality Councils throughout Britain, and it is good to see some of them represented here today.

The remit of the CRE is extensive as you can imagine, and is best summed up by our Mission Statement:-

> The Commission for Racial Equality is working for a just society which gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live free from discrimination and prejudice, and from the fear of racial harassment and violence.

In short, we operate through prosecution, prevention and promotion. Within our work we address many issues which relate to racial discrimination, racial harassment and racial violence. We work in both the public and private sectors, in the fields of employment and education, with the health service, the social services, and the Criminal Justice system, and we also take our role as "public educator" extremely seriously. We aim to promote the notion of equal opportunity and of tolerance and to promote the richness of cultural and racial diversity throughout British society.

Although they are not part of our responsibility, the CRE has been concerned with issues surrounding religious discrimination and religious intolerance for many years. Britain has a genuinely multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-religious society, with 5.5% of our overall population in 1991, - that is over 3million of the 55million people in Britain - coming from communities who do not classify themselves as white. Half of these communities are South Asian, mainly of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent and 30% are from African and Caribbean descent. Almost half of all these live in London.

Most, if not all of the religions of the world would be represented here in Britain, and the absence of legislation relating to Religious Discrimination is increasingly being questioned. Indeed only on Thursday there was a short debate on the subject in the House of Lords. The Muslim community is particularly vocal about religious discrimination and intolerance, and has argued for some time for legal protection from religious intolerance and discrimination. "Islamophobia" is now the shorthand word to describe the prejudice and discrimination faced by Muslims. Following the publication in 1997 of the report which investigated "Islamophobia", the Runnymede Trust together with the Uniting British Trust - a charity set up by the CRE - have reconvened the "Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia" under Dr Richard Stone. This study is concentrating on three main areas - media, law, and the representation of Muslims in social and political life. The Secretary of the Commission is based at the CRE, and I can provide anyone with contact details for the project.

The CRE is therefore concerned to share in addressing the needs of the Muslim community. However, and this is the crux of the matter for the CRE. The 1976 Race Relations Act **does not** cover religious discrimination. It is this point to which I now wish to turn and to spend the remainder of my speech addressing. What position does the CRE have on these issues.

THE STATUS QUO

As I have said, current legislation in Britain does not provide protection to any individual who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on religious grounds. That is, to say, discrimination on grounds of religion is **not** unlawful in Britain.

However, the CRE is not totally powerless to act because it is sometimes possible to persuade a court or tribunal that **religious** discrimination in **effect** amounts to unlawful indirect **racial** discrimination against a particular racial group and racial groups are covered by the Race Relations Act. For example, discrimination against Muslims or Hindus may, in certain circumstances, constitute **indirect racial discrimination** against Pakistanis, Bangladeshis or Indians.

For example, in a recent case an employer who refused to allow Muslim employees time off to celebrate "Eid" was found to have indirectly discriminated on racial grounds against his Pakistani employees. In order to clarify the CRE's position, we have now published a short pamphlet called "Religious Discrimination - know your rights".

NORTHERN IRELAND

I referred earlier to Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland the situation is quite different. The Northern Ireland Fair Employment legislation includes religion amongst categories under which it is unlawful to discriminate in respect of:
- Employment
- Further and Higher education
- The provision of good, facilities and services
- The disposal of and management of premises.

Additionally, there is also a statutory duty imposed on public authorities to, I quote "have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious beliefs". Since October of this year there has existed a unitary authority in Northern Ireland - the Equality Commission - which will undertake the work previously carried out by the four separate Equality Commissions. Clearly, Northern Ireland's legislation provides greater protection to individuals and to religious groups than does British legislation.

CRE ACTION

Given that the CRE is so concerned about promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating racial discrimination, encouraging good relations between people from different racial backgrounds, promoting religious and cultural diversity, **what** are we doing on this issue?

Well, one of the duties that the CRE has is to keep the 1976 Race Relations Act under review and to make recommendations to Government from time to time on how the Act can be improved. This is a duty we take very seriously.

In 1992, the CRE put forward, as part of its second review of the Act, a recommendation that a law against religious discrimination should be given serious consideration. We said then that, for many, identity through faith is more important than identity through national origin.

The Government's response at that time was lukewarm and the then Home Secretary, Michael Howard, stated that <u>he was not yet convinced</u> that legislation could be justified. We have submitted to the current Home Secretary, Jack Straw, a paper outlining our current concerns. Included within this we provided qualitative evidence from religious communities within Britain - outlining what their concerns and fears are and what remedies they seek. We have also submitted to Government a <u>draft bill</u> on **<u>incitement to religious hatred</u>** based on the <u>racial</u> hatred provisions of the Public Order Act 1986.

What then is actually required to address these issues within Britain? What is needed to ensure religious tolerance and the promotion of cultural diversity? If we break the issue down into specific components we can see that a number of legislative measures are required if religious discrimination is to be comprehensively tackled.

These components are:-
• blasphemy - presently only the established Christian religion is protected under the blasphemy laws within Britain
• incitement to religious hatred - presently there is no legislation to protect individuals or groups from any act of religious hatred
• acts of religious discrimination which constitute <u>indirect</u> racial discrimination, to which I referred earlier
• and, of course, acts of <u>direct</u> religious discrimination.

These are the components which need addressing, and these are the issues which the CRE continue to discuss with the present Government.

As some of you will know, the Home Office has recently commissioned academic research into the extent of religious discrimination within Britain. The research is being undertaken by the <u>University of Derby</u> and has four main aims:

• To assess the evidence of religious discrimination in England and Wales, both actual and perceived.
• To describe the patterns shown by this evidence
• To indicate the extent to which religious discrimination overlaps with racial discrimination, and
• To identify the <u>range of policy options</u> available for dealing with religious discrimination

This work is to be completed by Autumn 2000. It will hopefully provide objective evidence of the extent of religious discrimination, in Britain, will inform debate, and assist in identifying a meaningful way forward. I have more information on the project if anyone would like further details.

I referred a moment ago to the consultation carried out by the CRE with religious commentates in Britain on the issue of religious discrimination.

In this consultation we found that only a <u>minority</u> of communities believed that the British Government <u>would</u> introduce broader legislative protection for them on religious grounds. What the communities saw as <u>more likely</u> was protection being accorded to them as a result of <u>European</u> legislation. I want now to turn to Europe.

EUROPE

The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK domestic legislation, and the insertion of article 13 of the treaty of Amsterdam, and of an anti-discrimination clause (giving European Union institutions competence to act in a wide range of ideas, including religion), offers some hope. However, it is <u>too early</u> to assess the impact of these developments. The Human Rights Act - that will require public authorities to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights and makes the Convention enforceable in UK courts - is not yet in force. With its guarantee of 'freedom of religion' and religious observance together with protection against discrimination, it <u>could be</u> a valuable weapon against religious discrimination.

In addition, under the EU Treaty a directive is being prepared that would outlaw discrimination in the workplace on several grounds including religion. If approved the directive would require the UK to legislate in this area.

In the meantime, the European Union has set up in Vienna the European Monitoring Centre on racism and xenophobia. Its board members are nominees of the member countries together with representation of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The United Kingdom member is Bob Purkiss, a fellow Commissioner of mine at the CRE. Thus we have a close link with the Monitoring Centre, its UK Secretariat is based within the CRE, to digress a little.

The work of the Monitoring Centre starts from the premise that Europe's future is based on its cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Through its role as an independent monitor of knowledge and a co-ordinator of know-how and commitment, it seeks to build bridges across Europe to combat racism and xenophobia. <u>How</u> this will focus on religious discrimination has yet to be established, but within the UK round table (held under the Monitoring Centre's auspices last week), there was a <u>workshop</u> on religion and racism. Some of you were there and we look forward to seeing your report as a contribution to the debate.

However, whatever the outcome in relation to legislative change on religious discrimination in Europe or on the domestic front, the CRE believes that there should still be change within UK <u>domestic criminal law.</u> This would protect religious groups from violence and acts of religious hatred. To this end, and as I have mentioned earlier, the CRE has put proposals forward to Government seeking amendments to the Public Order Act 1986 to introduce a clause to make it an offence to incite religious hatred. We continue to liaise with Government on this, and we are firmly convinced of its need.

SUMMARY

To summarise the main points I have been making:-

1. The CRE has no specific power under the Race Relations Act 1976 to assist people who believe that they have been discriminated against on religious grounds. However, is some cases the facts will enable religious discrimination to be treated as **Indirect racial discrimination**. Whilst this provides <u>protection</u> in <u>particular cases</u> it does <u>not</u> advance the call to outlaw religious discrimination.

2. However, the CRE is not complacent where religious discrimination is concerned. I have told you of the many ways in which we are working both with the British Government and with European institutions to encourage the development of legislative protection for individuals and communities.

3. There is the possibility that the changes in European Legislation may force legislative changes within Member States, and that could lead to greater protection for all UK citizens.

4. We do support and welcome the work that the Home Office have asked Derby University to undertake on religious discrimination, and we hope that this research will provide qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform and guide the debate, and

5. The CRE will continue to push the powers that be to incorporate into domestic criminal law a new criminal offence to control the stirring up of religious hatred.

I would like to conclude with the point with which I started - that is, the CRE is committed to ensuring that all British Citizens can enjoy living and working in a <u>just society</u> and in a society which is <u>free of (racial and religious) discrimination,</u> prejudice, harassment and violence.

We do not have the jurisdiction to deal with religious discrimination but we are doing all we can to <u>encourage debate around the issue</u> and to encourage the development of necessary legislative protection.

Finally, I would like to end with a quote from a great religious leader, a great politician, and a great advocate of religious tolerance - <u>Mahatma Ghandi</u>. For me, this sums up what we should be aiming for throughout the global community:-

> **"<u>I do not want my home to be wailed in on all sides and its windows to be stuffed. I want all cultures of all lands to be blown about <u>my house</u> as freely as possible. But <u>I refuse to be blown off my feet by any</u>".**

Thank you.

Commissioner Hugh Harris
Deputy Chair
Commission for Racial Equality (London)

'Religion and Public Policy'
Public Policy and Religious Diversity

Plenary Address 1, 11:30am, Sunday 31ˢᵗ October 1999
The Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference, London

The classic liberal view on religion and the state was enunciated by Thomas Jefferson in 1777 when introducing a draft bill to the Virginia legislature: "no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions and belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion...". Even Jefferson had problems in getting these views enshrined in legislation, which took another nine years.

All liberal democracies subscribe to the concept of religious freedom. In this they differ from totalitarian or theocratic societies.   In the communist systems 'religious freedom' often meant the right to worship but not to proselytise, as in the Stalin Constitution of the USSR in 1936. Ministries of 'religious cults', usually headed by atheists, ensured that some religions were licensed and that others were not. Practice varied, from the extensive freedom allowed the Catholic Church in Poland to the official atheism of Albania.   In theocracies, such as Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan or Iran, public order authorities enforce dress and behaviour codes (mainly on women) and govern according to the Islamic *sharia*. Effective religious minorities do not exist in Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan but in Iran the lot of Bahai's, Assyrians and especially Jews, has not been a happy one and many have emigrated. In both communist and theocratic societies official attempts were made to disguise the extent of religious persecution, mainly to appeal to sympathisers in more liberal systems. Communist atheism was embarrassing to many on the left, just as Islamic fundamentalism is embarrassing to many Muslims, especially those living as minorities in western societies.

The communist and fundamentalist treatment of religious freedom is at the opposite pole from that espoused by liberal democracies. However, in the past of such democracies there has usually been a long struggle to move away from religious conformity and this has often left relics, anomalies and compromises. Nonconformists (non-Anglican Protestants) were not emancipated until 1690 in Britain nor were Catholics until 1829. Even later, non-Anglicans were not allowed to hold public office, nor to marry into royalty, nor even to sit in the House of Commons or to enter Oxford or Cambridge universities. The ancient Catholic aristocracy (the Howards most prominently) were allowed to practice their religion in private and to take a role in public affairs, but not until 1870 were practising Jews allowed to sit in the British parliament (Disraeli having converted to Christianity). Other remnants of religious coercion remain, such as Sunday observance laws, the establishment of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, the laws of blasphemy and of royal marriage.

Similar anomalous relics remain in equally secular societies such as Sweden or Germany. In all democracies problems arise for those religions espousing pacifism, such as Quakers and Mennonites, denying the supremacy of civil authority, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, or being on the margin or beyond the fringe of accepted 'religions', such as Scientologists. Special problems arise for non-Christians in western democracies based ultimately on Christian values and traditions. All states impose certain moral values. But in secular liberal democracies these are increasingly justified in terms of 'personal injury' or 'community standards' rather than as sanctioned by religion

The Separation of Church and State

The European religious wars between 1600 and 1648 established the principle *cuius regio eius religio.* This left the imposition of Catholicism or Protestantism in the hands of the monarch and his state. A similar principle had already been established in England in 1536 when the Church of England was created with Henry VIII at its head. One relic of this was the state churches of England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway and the enshrining of Catholicism in the constitutions of several European and Latin American states. Societies in which Protestantism was dominant, with the Netherlands in the lead, gradually moved away from the principle of a single religion enforced by the state, even when they left the dominant religion with considerable power, resources and legislative support. Protestantism encouraged collective forms of voluntary organisation seeking the truth in their own way. Jews and atheists could obviously not fit into a religious system based on enforcing the truth of Christianity. Nonconformists of this type either had to emigrate, to keep silent or to face fines and restrictions. In the long, hard struggle which lasted for several centuries even in the most liberal societies, the principle of separating church and state became accepted by liberals. It inspired the American constitution, French revolutionary secularism, and, more mildly, the disestablishment of the Anglican church in Ireland (1869) and Wales (1920). It was particularly influential in the United States where the pioneering settlers of New England had been escaping from the established church and where Baptists and Methodists form the two largest Protestant denominations.

Separation of church and state is entrenched in the constitutions of the United States, Australia, France and many other political systems. The American formulation in the First Amendment of 1791 is: " Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The Australian, directly inspired from the US, is s.116: "The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth". Both formulations were historically a reaction against the established position of the Church of England in their respective colonial societies. The Australian constitution, in its preamble, nevertheless describes the people constituting the federation of 1901 as "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God" and the proposed preamble to be voted on 6 November,1999 also refers to God, as did Jefferson's original formulation two centuries before.

Clearly both constitutions, like the various constitutions of republican France, entrench the separation of church and state. Yet they have been differently interpreted in many respects. The United States is more actively religious than Australia and has well organised Jewish and fundamental Protestant lobbies actively engaged in the political process, which is far less true of Australia. In both societies the Catholic proportion is the same, at about 26 per cent of the population. Yet in Australia the Catholic education system has received state subsidies since 1966, whereas such support is denied to all non-public schools in the US. In Australia Protestant, Jewish and Islamic schools also enjoy subsidies on the same basis. The organised strength of American religion has not made similar gains. However, in both societies religious institutions enjoy very considerable tax benefits.   In the United States religion may not even be mentioned in the official census, Jews being described as "Russians" in the ethnicity question, which is strange as most of their ancestors were escaping from Russian persecution. Australia, in contrast, has had an optional question on religion in all censuses for over a century.

Separating church and state in the national constitution does not end controversy. The Australian states are not bound in this respect by s.116 of the national constitution. In the United States the federal system allows considerable variation. This is most famously indicated by the 1925 Tennessee prohibition on teaching evolution, an issue still kept very much alive and sometimes surfacing in Australia, especially in Queensland where fundamental Protestantism is stronger than elsewhere. Sabbath observance has been the most obvious case of imposing a religious limitation on others, especially Jews, Muslims and Seventh Day Adventists who have a Sabbath on a day other than Sunday. Among the most extreme Australian cases was Victoria in the quite recent past, where no newspapers, no cinemas or theatres, no liquor outlets, no shops and no commercial sports were legally permitted on a Sunday. All this has been swept away by non-compliance, the decline of religious observance and the settlement of large numbers of non-British immigrants. But vestiges remain elsewhere, including especially Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland and the Victorian situation did not change radically until the mid-1970s.

Even when church and state are constitutionally separated, the politics of religion make for different outcomes. The associated idea that 'politics and religion do not mix' is quite unrealistic and certainly does not apply in the United States. Religion and ethnicity are vital components of the politics of most democracies. This may be deplored by secular liberals or socialists but is inescapable.   The Netherlands produced one solution, called 'consociationalism' by Dutch political scientists Arend Lijphart. Catholic, Protestant and secular streams organise politics, unions, and many social activities but government is always on the basis of coalition and compromise. Another approach, most common in the United States and Canada, is the creation of ethnically and religiously balanced tickets for public office and the use of distinct appeals tailored for all elements in the society because all have the vote equally - a quite recent development in the southern USA. The compromising coalition works best in rich societies where there are ample resources to be distributed. However it was adopted until recently in the politics of India and Sri Lanka

as well. The benefit of 'consociational democracy' is that all major religious and ethnic elements are admitted to a role in public office and policy formulation. The tendency towards majoritarian democracy is thus inhibited, with consequent benefit for minorities.

Non-Christian Religions

The practices of liberal democracies have mainly developed within the intellectual context of theories of church-state relations in Christian societies: medieval for Catholics, early modern for Protestants and more recently for the Orthodox. The spread of representative democracy to cover the entire globe and the movement of non-Christians into western societies through migration, have been very recent phenomenon requiring new understandings.   While Christians frequently presented other religions as intolerant and fanatical (as many still do) the reality was often that the state did not impose religious practices in non-Christian societies and that authoritative structures did not govern non-Christian religions. In the Ottoman Empire there was considerable self-government allowed to the various 'religions of the book' under the *millet* system. While Ottoman tolerance was often tempered by massacres, this allowed more freedom, for example, to the Jews of Salonika than they had previously enjoyed in Catholic Spain (not to mention their eventual extinction under the Nazi occupation). The various Orthodox churches of the Balkans and the Middle East could not have survived without such a system, which privileged Muslims but did not prohibit other religions as long as they did not challenge the state. All this was despite the fact that the Ottoman sultan also claimed to be the Caliph of Islam worldwide.

Elsewhere the idea of a state religious monopoly was much rarer than in Europe. Buddhism had a special relationship with the state in classical Sri Lanka but was eclectic in practice and able to absorb many Hindu beliefs. Even today the constitutional enshrining of Buddhism's "rightful place" in Sri Lanka does not give it a monopoly. Nor did Hinduism disappear from the Muslim-conquered areas of India.   Chinese and Japanese religious variety continued within a framework broadly described as Buddhism. Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism had hierarchical authority structures and these were often tenuous for Muslims as well. The recent politicisation and reorganisation of Buddhism and Hinduism in India, Sri Lanka or Thailand is a very modern phenomenon inspired by western models.

In very recent times representatives of non-Christian religions have settled in European and American societies where they often form larger minorities than the long-established and generally accepted Jews. Between one and four per cent of the populations of France, the United States, Germany, Britain and Australia are Muslims. Smaller elements practice Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese religions. In the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, religious variety is even greater, being based on long-established communities rather than immigrants. The task of public authorities has become more complex. They must extend the same rights to their non-Christian citizens as have been established over a long period for the majority. They must protect them against the xenophobia usually vented upon strangers and previously manifested in anti-Semitism. They must inspect laws and regulations which discriminate, for example, on Sabbath and

holiday observance, marriage, family structures, food, education, burials, subsidies to religious institutions and a range of other matters of public concern. They might also have to cope with unusual levels of religious enthusiasm threatening public order, as with the reaction against *The Satanic Verses.*   All this is best done within an overall policy of multiculturalism which accepts religious as well as cultural, linguistic and racial diversity. It is also best done by admitting representatives of the new religions to consultative processes which allow them to explain their practices and attitudes.

The limits of official tolerance

To allow the free exercise of religion is widely accepted and even entrenched in public documents and administrative practice in most western societies. The official acceptance of multiculturalism in states such as Australia, Canada, the Netherlands or Sweden underpins this acceptance. Most debate there has been about ethnicity rather than religion, often a false dichotomy. But because religions are frequently conservative and believe in absolute truths and transcendental values, they may come into collision with beliefs and practices in the most liberal and secular of societies. Consequent collisions may be resolved by political processes, by the courts, by compromise or by the tacit acceptance of non-compliance. Attempts to resolve on the basis of principle often fail because different principles are fundamental to the conflicting sides. It is always difficult to disentangle xenophobic from rational attitudes, for example in the opposition to Islamic schooling from those who favour Christian schooling, or objection to headscarves and turbans from those who would never criticise the habit of nuns or priests.

Compromise is the essence of political resolution and is easiest when fundamental stands on principle are not taken. This presupposes a consensus on democratic methods and multicultural values, institutions which enshrine these, and a public which is not unduly moved by religious fundamentalism. Where these preconditions do not exist, or where political mobilisation of religions becomes normal, legislation for tolerance is likely to be ineffective.

Secularism as the Defender of Religious Freedom

Perverse as it may sound, the best defence of religious freedom is a low level of religious activity and allegiance, as in England, Sweden or Australia. This was not true in the more religious past where nonconformist minorities fought for their rights against the established churches. Some, as in puritan England or New England, were intolerant of the rights of different believers or of non-believers and non-Christians. anti-Semitism, racism, sexism and xenophobia are entrenched in fundamental Protestantism as in other religions. But more recently religious rights have been extended as an aspect of secular indifference. The irreligious have ended Sabbath observance because they wanted to enjoy themselves rather than go to church. They see no need for the state to defend beliefs and practices which they do not share. This often extends to privatising practices which were once illegal, such as homosexuality, because the religious prohibitions are no longer acceptable. In the immortal words of Pierre Trudeau, "the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation".

Fanatical secularists may, of course, threaten religious freedom. The French insistence on a rigidly secular public school system has recently produced some examples such as the banning of religious indicators including headscarves for females. Similar incidents have occurred in British state schools.   Secularists have objected to *kosher* and *halal* butchery. Secularists have tried to prohibit Sikh turbans as a substitute for motorbike helmets or bus drivers' caps. Bureaucrats in Canada have allied with dairy farmers to restrict the right of Old Order Amish to produce milk without electricity-driven refrigeration. Feminists have actively intervened to criticise the status of Muslim women. All of these, and many other cases, are at the borderline between tolerance and xenophobia and between religious and secular beliefs.

Nevertheless, it is usually in the most secularised societies that the greatest tolerance is allowed for religious difference. It might also be argued that tolerance is greater in societies not dominated by the Judaeo-Christian-Muslim traditions emanating originally from the Middle East. India, Sri Lanka, Korea and Japan are arguably more tolerant of religious variety than many Christian or Muslim societies because they do not make a rigid distinction between orthodoxy and error. China is a different case because of the tension between communist ideology and religious practice. But in many non-Christian societies such as India or Indonesia the politicisation of religion has begun to create the same problems of intolerance and repression which Europe is escaping from as it becomes more secular and more indifferent both to religion and to ideology.

In a relatively indifferent secular society what principles should guide public policy towards religious variety? At the risk of seeming old-fashioned, the mid-Victorian principles of John Stuart Mill, that any belief or practice should be permitted where it does not manifestly harm others, still seem relevant.   Female circumcision does physical harm - infant male circumcision does not. Private homosexuality does not harm any more than private heterosexuality - but aggressive behaviour does harm others in both cases. Individuals may decide what method of birth control to use and whether to become divorced but the state should impose no preferences. Divorce law then becomes a matter of child protection and property disposal. God may be worshipped on any day of the week and employment practices should be adjusted to take this into account. The wearing of religious indicators harms nobody. If Christian schools receive public funding so should all other properly conducted and examined schools. If some religions impose food taboos, public institutions should take the preferences of their clients into consideration (as international airlines already do). If planning permission is given to supermarkets, entertainment centres or churches, it should also be given, within the same regulations, to mosques and temples. Laws, regulations and practices should be neutral between religions and should regularly be examined and if necessary repealed if they are not.   While imperfections remain, these principles have been implemented under multicultural principles in Australia and elsewhere, despite objections from religious and secular interest.

What has been more reluctantly acknowledged is that measures against racist behaviour should be extended to religious discrimination.   In many non-Christian societies the

distinction between ethnicity and religion is artificial and such acknowledgement seems essential. Indeed it has been recognised in Northern Ireland's equal opportunity and discrimination practices.

These approaches are much less likely to be adopted in societies where religion is deeply embedded in the culture and strongly supported by the great majority. The politicisation of such loyalties makes the situation worse for minorities. It is highly improbable, however desirable, that the above principles will be adopted in societies which are not democratic and in which a large leaven of the non-religious is not present.   Problems remain in the most liberal of societies such as the refusal of some religions to accept the equality of women, the distinction between religions and profitable enterprises, hostility to conventional education, and the imposition of beliefs which fly in the face of established science. Some of these problems may be solved by sensitive legislation, some by the erosion of sects through defection, some by changes within religions responding to a liberal environment.   The very processes of secularisation which many religions deplore, may still be the basis on which they are allowed to function free from state interference.

Dr James Jupp
Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies
Australian National University

> **Religion, Multiculturalism and Democracy – the contribution of
> international social sciences**
>
> **Opening Address, 10:30am, Sunday 31st October 1999
> The Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference, London**

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be with you here in London, to participate in the Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference and to discuss with you some themes that will lie at the core of the Global Cultural Diversity Congress in Cardiff. During the sessions of today's conference, which has been organised by the Australian Multicultural Foundation in association with the European Multicultural Foundation and UNESCO, you will address some of the most pressing issues concerning the peaceful co-existence of religious communities. You will thereby contribute to the activities co-ordinated by UNESCO in the framework of the International Year of a Culture of Peace, as proclaimed by the United Nations for the year 2000. More specifically, you will make an important contribution to the general debate on how to accommodate for cultural differences in a democratic polity, a debate which has emerged in many countries as a response to new types of socio-cultural conflict resulting from the proliferation of identity groups claiming recognition in the public sphere.

On behalf of the "Management of Social Transformations" (MOST) Programme, one of the main Programmes of UNESCO's Social Science sector, I shall like to share with you some ideas on the specific role of international social sciences in analysing the dynamics of such types of conflict and in monitoring public policies in multicultural societies. In a first step, I shall identify some structural factors which underlie the contemporary transformation of democratic polities, with special regard to the cultural and to the religious sphere (1). I will then shift to a normative reflection on principles of democratic governance from which context-sensitive policy-options for the public management of cultural and religious diversity can be derived (2). And finally, I will give some examples of how such context-sensitive policy-formulation can be monitored through international social sciences by reviewing some of the recent activities of UNESCO's MOST Programme (3).

1. Globalisation and the transformation of the modern nation-state

To grasp the contemporary transformation of democratic polities, we need to understand the cultural dynamics of the modern nation-state. The nation-state which emerged as a corollary to processes of economic and political modernisation, has been characterised by a combination of universalistic and particularistic elements. It includes its members into a legal system based on universalistic values such as individual liberty and equality, while it excludes 'others' through the stabilisation of external territorial borders and through the construction of symbolic boundaries which define the nation as a particularistic 'imagined community'.

The modern institution of 'citizenship' exemplifies well this combination of universalistic and particularistic elements, in so far as it encompasses two analytically distinct components: the juridical status of legal personhood and a form of membership in a national community, which together constitute the conditions for participation in a democratic polity. The process of successive inclusion into a system of civil, political and social modes of participation in the 19th and 20th century has generally assumed that these

two components would neatly map onto one another. It was thus assumed that participation should and could be based on a 'thick' cultural consensus, and where such a consensus was absent nation-states often adopted policies of cultural homogenisation. Comparative social science has shown how the institutional outcomes of these national projects of inclusion through cultural homogenisation vary depending on the specific trajectories of state-formation and nation-building.

In the religious sphere, for instance, the projects of state-formation and nation-building have had different results depending mainly on the dynamics of confessional conflict in early modern Europe. On the one hand, the universalistic principle of religious freedom, which became successively institutionalised in the course of European secularisation as part of the legal component of citizenship, legitimated a considerable degree of religious diversity. On the other hand, the nation-states' models of social cohesion favoured specific types of institutional relations between the state and particular religious traditions. These range from the French model of strict separation of state and religion over systems of co-operation between the state and religious organisations characteristic for Austria, Belgium and Germany, to state churches such as in the Scandinavian countries. Furthermore, the process of nation-building sometimes drew on religious symbols for the construction of symbolic boundaries, resulting in a close interrelation of religious affiliation and membership in the imagined national community. As a consequence, participation in the democratic polity was often mediated by religious factors despite increasing secularisation of society.

It is this cultural pattern of the modern nation-state which is currently undergoing a dramatic transformation, a process which we perceive as 'globalisation'.

'Globalisation' refers, firstly, to the emergence of global configurations, networks and chains of interaction and, secondly, to the increased consciousness of the 'world-as-a-whole'. The emergence of global structures, which are based on the infrastructure of new information and communication technologies, has predominantly occurred under the lead of the capitalist economy, through the liberalisation of markets, increased labour migration, the deregulation of financial flows, the implementation of more flexible modes of production and the proliferation of transnational corporations. As a consequence, the nation-state has become externally constrained in its capacity of control. Secondly, the consciousness of the 'world-as-a-whole' has accentuated the particularity of cultural traditions and, hence, the relevance of cultural diversity. The proliferation of cultural identity groups claiming recognition and full participation in the democratic polity can be understood as a local response to global transformations. The reason is that ethnic, linguistic or religious traditions provide symbolic resources for the collective mobilisation of discontent with structural change or for the affirmation of personal identity in the face of increasing uncertainty. Hence, the nation-state is weakened also internally in its capacity of guaranteeing social cohesion.

An example for this development is the re-emergence of religion in the political arena. Thus, the world-wide impact of religious fundamentalism on the mobilisation of political movements and the potential of ethno-religious conflicts to undermine processes of state-formation and economic development have even inspired hypotheses of a 'clash of civilisations' (S. Huntington) or a coming 'new cold war' (M. Juergensmeyer) structured along lines of religious difference. Although these widely influential arguments are overstated, it cannot be denied that religious difference is a main factor of contemporary social conflict at various levels. At the same time, some religious communities have indisputably contributed to processes of democratisation, to the promotion of human rights and civil society and to the articulation of protest against economic exploitation in many regions of the world. Finally, religion has re-emerged as a carrier for the cultural identity of marginalised groups, in the European context especially of migrant communities. This re-

emergence of religion in the political arena, however, is challenging the established institutions of democratic polities. It calls for more inclusive modes of participation, for a 'democratisation of democracy' (A. Giddens).

The core dilemma faced by democratic institutions can be exemplified by the institution of citizenship. The first component of the institution of citizenship, the juridical status of legal personhood, has increasingly become subject to normative definitions at the international level. National models of social inclusion have thus been superseded by a more universalistic model of what has been called 'transnational' or 'postnational' citizenship. Given the universalism of international norms of legal personhood, membership in a national community and, hence, a 'thick' cultural consensus can no more prefigure participation in a democratic polity. The two components of citizenship have therefore become disaggregated in the process of globalisation. The core dilemma of formulating principles of democratic governance in multicultural and multi-faith societies therefore is to respect international norms of legal citizenship including rights to cultural identity and, at the same time, to promote the institutional structures which are necessary for sustaining a democratic polity at the nation-state level.

2. Multiculturalism - a policy strategy for culturally diverse societies

In order to formulate principles of democratic governance in multicultural and multi-faith societies, it is imperative to take into account the normative framework of international law. Of course, the norms relating to the Freedom of Religion, which are laid out in the International Bill of Human Rights and have been specified in the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief (1981), are of crucial relevance in this regard. Of equal importance, however, are the norms pertaining to the protection of minorities. In the past decades, there has been a development in international law from an assimilation-oriented toleration to the promotion of the identity of ethnic or national, linguistic and religious minorities. Articles 1 and 55 of the UN Charter as well as the International Bill of Human Rights (Article 2 (1) UDHR; Articles 2 (1) and 26 ICCPR) commit the member states to the basic principles of equality and non-discrimination. There are several international conventions which specify the implications of these principles by granting specific rights to members of minorities in the areas of education, media and political participation, among which the most important binding legal instrument is Article 27 of the ICCPR.

However, a consensus has evolved in international law to go beyond the principles of equality and non-discrimination by granting a right to cultural identity and by obliging the state to pro-actively protect and promote the identity of minorities. It is argued that in so far as the right to cultural identity can only be enjoyed in community with others, it implies the extension of an individualistic understanding of human rights to more group-specific provisions. The first comprehensive and universal standard setting international declaration acknowledging the necessity to promote minority identities and explicating the rights of members of minorities is the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992.

A more detailed legal analysis of this Declaration underlines that the model of social integration promoted through the norms of international law de-legitimises any 'thick' cultural consensus of a democratic polity. How the promotion of minority identities in a 'separate domain' can be co-ordinated with the functioning of a 'common domain' (A. Eide), is however not determined by these norms. Although they provide some abstract yardsticks for the public management of cultural diversity, they need to be specified by more context-sensitive concepts such as democratic governance and multiculturalism.

The concept of 'democratic governance' is generally associated with the shift of power from the public to the private sector, with the strengthening of civil society, and with institutional reforms within the public sector. Thus, recent political theory has emphasised that democracy presupposes the existence of civil society as an autonomous sector, separate from both the administrative and the economic system, and characterised by a pluralism of actors, voluntary civic associations, and interest groups. The functioning of civil society, in turn, requires a pluralistic public sphere in which citizens, sharing only the commitment to a 'thin' consensus on procedural rules of discourse, are actively involved (J. Habermas).

Multiculturalism, understood as a set of policy strategies to accommodate for cultural differences, can be inscribed into this framework of democratic governance. In distinction to strategies of assimilation or differentiation, it recognises the claims for recognition of ethnic, linguistic or religious identity groups within a pluralistic civil society, promotes their equal participation in the public sphere and, thereby, strengthens mechanisms of public consensus formation. It should be noted that - within the framework of democratic governance - multiculturalism does not conceive of cultural identities as fixed essential categories but as properties of voluntary associations of individuals. Also it should be noted that multiculturalism does not regard the public sphere as culturally neutral; therefore, procedural rules of discourse need continuously to be subjected to open re-negotiations between ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. This includes, for instance, the discursive re-negotiation of the place of religion in the political arena.

Now, the implementation of public policies of multiculturalism will have to vary according to the historical trajectories of each nation-state and their institutional outcomes. With regard to religion, for instance, different practical problems will arise with respect of fuller participation in the areas of education, media and administration under conditions of a system of co-operation between state and religious organisations as compared to countries with a strict separation or with state churches. It is at this level of societal contexts that social sciences can play a crucial role in monitoring the implementation of context-sensitive policies of multiculturalism.

3. The contribution of international social sciences

The success of context-sensitive public policies designed to manage democratically cultural diversity can only be evaluated by means of critical social science analysis. It is precisely along this line that UNESCO's MOST Programme has tried to stimulate international and interdisciplinary research projects. From a comparative social science perspective, activities within the MOST Programme focus on the specific societal contexts under which policies of multiculturalism are currently being developed. They also try to feed back results of social sciences into the policy-making process.

The two MOST projects Monitoring of ethnicity, conflict and cohesion and Managing cultural, ethnic and religious diversities of local, state and international levels in Central Europe, for instance, have established networks of social scientists and politicians at different levels engaged in developing an early-warning system for ethnic conflicts in post-communist countries. The MOST project Democratic governance in a multicultural and multi-ethnic society is providing assistance in the transition of the Kyrgyz Republic to democracy by organising an integrated democracy training programme which is informed by social research, carried out by political and academic institutions, and offered to politicians, legislators and representatives of civil society. An example for a bottom-up strategy, involving joint efforts of local authorities, civil society actors and migrant networks is the MOST project Multicultural Policies and Modes of Citizenship in European Cities

which compares channels of activation and channels of mobilisation for minority groups in different European countries.

While these MOST projects promote interdisciplinary, international and policy-related social science research, UNESCO's MOST Programme has also established an infrastructure for the exchange of information on policy-development in the field of multiculturalism. Thus, the Clearing House on Linguistic and Religious Rights provides not only access to international legal instruments related to minority rights but also to comparative material on constitutional regulations and public policies. Finally, the MOST Programme has recently created an electronic Journal on Multicultural Societies which has started out with issues on conceptual and empirical problems of religious pluralism and covers themes ranging from theoretical discussions on culture and democracy to empirical analyses of transitional migrant communities in Europe.

Conclusion

In the course of my argument, I have focused on the challenges of formulating principles of democratic governance in multicultural societies. One of the specific challenges, which is of crucial importance throughout Europe, is the transformation of democratic institutions, so as to make them more responsive to the religious identities of migrant communities. This, in turn, requires a new understanding of the place of religion in the public sphere.

The UN General Assembly's Declaration on a Culture of Peace emphasises this point by stating in Article 8 that "a key role in the promotion of a culture of peace belongs to (…) religious bodies and groups (…)". Such a renewed role of religion in the public sphere requires that religions emphasise the reflexive and non-exclusive elements of their traditions. Religions engaging in an open dialogue can indeed make a crucial contribution to the democratic discourse about how we can live together - different yet equal. They can become some of the main carriers of a politics of dignity. And they can thereby sustain a culture of peace.

I thank you for your attention.

Mr Matthias Koenig MA
Institute for Sociology, University of Marburg, Germany
and MOST Programme, UNESCO

The story goes that there is a discussion about what constitutes the difference between heaven and hell. We imagine that there are a number of starving people seated around a large round table. They are chained to their chairs and can only move their arms. In the middle of the table is a large bowl of soup. Each person has a very long spoon so that they can reach the bowl. But when they try to eat they miss their mouth because the spoon is too long and as they spill the soup. Hell is when they keep trying to feed themselves and continue to fail. Eventually they would starve. Heaven is when they discover that they can feed each other and survive.

So it is with the various dynamics in a culturally and religiously diverse society. As long as each group thinks that they are the only ones who are right, who need consideration, whose cause is just and whose lobby needs to be responded to we produce hell. As a consequence we would develop conflict, often violence and sometimes even war. However, collectively we would reduce our society to no more than groups of competing interests without any lasting values to build on. Alternatively, when we recognise that building a nation out of diversity requires the collaboration and cooperation of all groups we feed each other the nourishment of our will to build a nation using the energy which comes from our diversity as the driving force for our own identity as well as the raw material which is used to build a vibrant and exciting nation or society.

Now I realise that Queensland is not the centre of the world. It is not even the centre of Australia, however, I think that it's a good microcosm of a model of how multiculturalism and multi-faith within that can operate and the thoughts which I'll express on the matter will relate to Queensland examples. Because basically we have the world in Australia. We are a microcosm of the world. Consider that we have about 160 different ethnic and national backgrounds, we have about 200 aboriginal groups, we speak about 350 languages and dialects, we practice about 90 religions. So that is an enormous diversity which needs to be managed and of course has conflict built in to it potentially to a degree that is enormously explosive. That we haven't had that kind of serious conflict experienced in similarly diverse societies is due to the types of policy which we are trying to promote in Australia and in each one of its States.

So to start with, let me quote to you the introduction to the Multicultural Policy of Queensland. But if you take the words Queensland and Australia out of it, I think you might find that it is a summary of what could be a model for any multicultural society:

Multiculturalism is a strategy for all Australians. It encourages all Australians to express, share and value one another's cultural heritage. Multiculturalism aims at ensuring that all Australian have equality of opportunity to benefit from and contribute to all aspects of life without prejudice or discrimination. Multiculturalism is based on the premise that everyone should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia and to its interests and future first and foremost. Multiculturalism exists within the structures and principles of Australian society, the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes. In this framework it promotes universal ideals of human rights, based on mutual respect, cooperation and a fair go for all.

The Government believes that cultural diversity is an economic and social benefit to the State and it encourages an environment that supports and rewards participation in the cultural, social and economic opportunities that the State offers. The government is committed to fostering an inclusive, cohesive and open society and to developing Queenslanders, regardless of their cultural ethnic, or religious background, gender, national origin, how long they have been here, or where they live in the State.

The Government implements its commitment to multiculturalism in partnership with communities, and supports strong viable community infrastructure to facilitate participation in the planning and implementation of the multicultural strategies. This Policy is based on three principals: access, participation and cohesion.

Access is about the undertaking by the Government that everyone in the state must have equal access to all its programs, services and all its facilities without prejudice and without discrimination and that where necessary, the Government must enable such access to take place. For example, if somebody is caught up in a court of law and does not speak English well, it is the State's responsibility to provide an interpreter service so that the person can equitably participate in that situation.

Participation is about that partnership, which the introduction spoke about between, community and the State. We encourage active community organisations and in fact, we fund community organisations through a rather large grants program to make it possible for community organisations to operate in their own interest but also for that interest to become part of the workings of the multicultural society to create harmonious community relations.

One special program is our Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP) whereby we provide substantial grants to local government organisations to develop community relations strategies and activities in their areas of responsibility. The purpose of this program is to build harmony in the community through active cooperation between all interests in that area so that hate speech, prejudice or discrimination are prevented, but in case they happen, would become ineffective.

Cohesion is about those harmonious community relations. Cohesion is about an attempt by State organisations, by community groups and the private sector to ensure that whilst the diversity is accepted and the individuality of each group, be it ethnic, cultural or religious, is respected that within the wider framework of the State, there has to be some cohesion rather than competition or fighting between those different groups. So the purpose of the whole policy is to foster and encourage the manifestation of a collective will to creating harmony among the diverse groups so that the state can function, so that the society doesn't tear itself apart.
We do this through a number of structures. For instance, within law we have anti-discrimination legislation and certainly in Queensland, we outlaw incitement to racial and religious hatred. Specifically mentioned, is religious hatred because very often in other such laws, the anti-discrimination component which deals with race and culture implies religion, but does not specifically name it so people begin to quibble what is a religion. Is a Jew a member of a religion or a member of a cultural or ethnic group? and in that way very often, the law becomes ineffective. Work is currently being undertaken to further amend this act to also outlaw racial and religious vilification.

We have government structures and community structures which can work independently or together, such as umbrella groups and government bodies like my own, which work at all levels of Government and the community.

Cohesion is about shared values, a constant dialogue between the groups, within government and between Government and the community about what multiculturalism means and how to move multiculturalism forward. For instance, just to give you a very quick example of how this works.   My office changed names within the last 9 years 3 times. It was first the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs; the emphasis here was on ethnicity, on ethnic groups trying to come up for air, trying to fight to be heard, trying to lobby for more rights and appropriate services and the Government responded to that. Then it was called the Office of Ethnic and Multicultural Affairs. That was a shift which recognised that ethnic affairs is very much part of the wider concept of multiculturalism. Now, we are Multicultural Affairs Queensland. The word ethnic now is implied because the specific ethnic groups within that should feature as importantly as any other mainstream group. Multiculturalism as the introduction said, is for all Australians and needs to be recognised as such by all Australians. In fact Australian identity, its culture is its multiculture within agreed frameworks which are included in our Multicultural Queensland Policy as mentioned before.

Within that context there are a number of issues involving the concept of community relations. How do we ensure that multiculturalism is recognised by the communities themselves and especially in Australia so that old animosities which they have brought from other places or which happen in other places and with which they identify, do not get transferred into Australia. After all, people are in Australia because they want to be in Australia and if they wanted to fight those battles, they should go to the places where these battles happen and not translate them into the country to which many escaped from trouble spots in order to find peace.

Apart from a lot of shuttle diplomacy which somebody like me has to undertake every day in working with the different groups to make this succeed, there are some other initiatives which we can take.

We need to recognise that a breakdown of community relations happens because of the following factors and that's not an exclusive list: lack of resources, territorialism, a sense of superiority by some, traditional or historic animosities, apportioning blame or scapegoating when something happens that we don't like or sheer prejudice. We need to address the ability of communities to work together by redressing those issues and by addressing them head on.

Within the wider policy consideration of this, we do this through grants, through Government strategies, through ensuring that consultation processes are in place in which communities can participate and help determine what the general policy should be and what is and is not acceptable general behaviour. Incidentally, this has nothing to do with political correctness, which is a term invented by those who want to sabotage efforts which promote harmonious community relations. It has everything to do with tacit agreements about what constitutes normative good behaviour as a result of which we have a balanced, peaceful and cohesive society based on the recognition by all sides of social conflict that peace and harmony is better - and by far cheaper - than racial or religious strife.

The goal of multiculturalism is to create the basis for different groups to live together in harmony. It is the basic tool for managing diversity. Therefore when we talk about community relations, we need to make it an on-going labour of love, I suggest, which requires constant effort just as any other relations do, be they family relations, the relations between lovers or the relations between countries for that matter.

The role of religion plays an important part here and it is a paradox that very often representatives of religion - it isn't the religion itself - it is the people who practice these

religions and represent them that they very often are the cause for disruption or for conflict in the community on the basis that they insist that theirs is the only way or theirs is the only truth.

So the role of religion would be to recognise first of all their own ethics and practice them. All religions have ethical principles which talk about how people should relate to each other and a final goal which tries to achieve peace and harmony. But very often the conflict arises when they differ on how best to achieve that. So the role of religion is to return to their own sense of ethics. To find an ability where they practice their own religion but accept the difference of others. Where they search and find common ground with others, and where they work together for joint aspirations, especially aspirations of peace and harmony in the community.

I want to give you very briefly 2 examples of how this can be done or how we are trying to do it in my area of responsibility.

In 1993, I created in Queensland an Interfaith Multicultural Forum which brings together people of any religion. At the moment its membership consists of 19 religions. They include the major Christian denominations, Jews, Muslims, Bahá'í, Brama Kumaris, Buddhists, Coadists, Taoists and a few others. The objectives of this Forum are that its membership must be open to all faiths. Members are committed to human existence and rights pertaining thereto as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other national and international human rights instruments. We are also committed to religious freedom and to the development of a society free from racial and religious prejudice, hatred and discrimination. To this end, we come together to provide a forum in Queensland which promotes the principles of equal rights and opportunities for members of all religious groups, with prejudice or discrimination. To facilitate the provision of information, education and understanding about different religions with the purpose of enhancing religious harmony. To encourage cooperation through statements and other activities against racism as one means of publicly applying the humanitarian principles of social justice and care for the rights of individuals and groups from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. To promote multiculturalism as a catalyst of social cohesion and harmony. To promote respect for the individuality of all religious groups. To join others from time to time as required to bring influence to bear to ensure that Australia continues to assist those fleeing from war, racial and religious intolerance and persecution. To seek and share relevant information about and seek collaboration with appropriate national and international organisations with similar aims and objectives.

This Interfaith Multicultural Forum meets monthly and discusses issues of the day from the perspective of their own religion and what their religion has to say to those issues. It also takes time out for the different religions to share their content, their principles about those particular issues so that we can learn from each other.

The other example is very interesting and just at its beginning. Griffith University in Brisbane is going to build a Multifaith Centre. This Multifaith Centre will be a place in which all the different religions will have a space of their own to practise their own religion and that will be open to students, faculty and members of the community. It is also a place where the different religions will come together and work on programs, research, analysis, and undertake activities from the position of their own religions. They need to find this common ground that all religions have and share the energy and the power which comes from all of them to make a contribution to issues of the day. The vision for the Centre is that it will provide a venue where people from different religious and cultural backgrounds can practice their religious faith and find common ground to work together for a better world.

The shared values inspiring this project are affirmation of the participants own religious traditions, respect for and recognition of difference, acceptance of the reality of religious pluralism and the multi-faith and multicultural nature of our society, the value of dialogue between people of different religions, faith and philosophies, working together for the good of the Australian and international community and for a fair and just society.

These are just two examples of what I think needs to happen in order to make multiculturalism in all it's aspects including the diversity of religion work. At its most fundamental, it is important to recognise the right of everybody to their religion and the encouragement for them to practice their religion, but at the same time to find with others, the common ground through dialogue and through shared activity in which they can all participate in order to create harmonious community relations so that our society can become more cohesive and neither culture, race, ethnicity nor religion become the cause for divisiveness. They should rather become the putty for the framework in which we all function as human beings to create a society, as the Prophet Micah says, in which everyone can sit under their vine and under their fig tree and none shall make them afraid.

Mr Uri Themal OAM
Executive Director
Multicultural Affairs Queensland
Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet

In order to discuss the theme of religious diversity and youth, I intend to highlight some of the achievements and projects of young adults from different faith traditions which have taken place over the past year and which are going to happen in the coming months. I hope to provide you with an insight into what is important to these young people and how they may view the future.

The phrase "religious diversity' can be seen as positive and for many people implies that those from different faith communities can co-exist and even meet, find common points of understanding and accept their differences. Yet in many parts of the world, people do not have the freedom to worship and young and old are persecuted for their beliefs. The word "youth" is often used rather loosely and can span a wide age range. In this paper I will generally use "young adult" instead and have taken this to mean those in their early twenties to thirties, however many of the projects and conferences I refer to have also involved younger people.

Let me begin by explaining my position. I am at present the Programme Coordinator for the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) and over the last two years have been closely involved with young adults from different faith communities across the world. I hope to disprove the frequently heard criticisms of young people such as, "they are so self-centered and materialistic; they don't care about what is happening around them". Of course there are those who are not prepared to work to bring about peace and justice and I do not and can not speak for every young person, but I can speak from my own experience.

In July '98, a group of IARF young adults, mainly from India, made an arduous journey by bus to Ladakh in the Himalayas. They met to share their religious backgrounds, cultures and hopes. For them interfaith encounter was not a luxury. They felt it was imperative to discuss the challenges before them. They believed that communication is a basic need and essential in maintaining good relations and helping to break down stereotypes which can be so harmful. In March this year, two students, an Orthodox Christian from Cyprus and a Muslim Turkish Cypriot were invited to speak together during a conference entitled, "Facing the Past, Freeing the Future" organised by the International Interfaith Centre, based in Oxford. The atmosphere was initially rather tense, but by the end, they discovered that they had found common ground. They both wanted to live peacefully on the island and would return to the young people in their communities and spread this message. It was felt that they had gained a new insight into each other's lives and would perhaps even try to work together in the future. An interesting point about the participants was that a third of them were young adults. The conference had been specifically structured so that the young people felt valued and were given an opportunity to speak. They were therefore able to enter into discussion with each other and also with elders from many faith traditions.

Young adults are pragmatic; they are keen to make progress. IARF convened a meeting in Amsterdam in April, to see how to cooperate effectively with other youth. They came from different faith communities and represented organisations such as the European Bahai Youth Council and interfaith organisations such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace. Although there are many projects taking place all over the world run by individuals and groups, the major interfaith organisations which carry a certain amount of status do play

an important role in providing an "umbrella" which can facilitate the encounter of those in conflict situations. We were particularly keen on strengthening the network of young adults in Europe and the Middle East. We formed a project which will take place in Egypt in September 2000, conditional upon us raising the money. As well as youth from other parts of the world, young Israelis and Palestinians will meet young Egyptians. We believe that an encounter of more than two perspectives helps to avoid a "win-lose" situation for those in conflict. The young people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds will not only spend time in discussions, but will also work together on an ecological project in an Egyptian village. I feel that it is important that they receive the support and encouragement of religious communities and other organisations.

There is a need for action, not just words. In my discussions with young adults from different faith backgrounds we have seen that events need not, even dare I say, should not necessarily be billed as "interfaith"; this can be offputting for some people. Create a project, or join in one that is ongoing which has an instant impact and appeal for young people. They are concerned about sustainable development. Many are committed to ethical trading and investment. They abhor injustice and are keen to promote human rights. There will then be a mix of young adults from faith traditions who are coming together for a common purpose. In this way, they get to know each other as individuals, rather than merely as a representative of a particular faith tradition. Prejudices and stereotypes may be dispelled.

There are also long-term programs being set up. One example is the Interfaith Youth Corps (co-sponsored by the Interfaith Centre of New York, the United Religious Initiative and the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions) which hopes to provide an opportunity for young adults to build deeper relationships among people of diverse traditions and religions. The young people will be able to express their spiritual ideals through service in a community that welcomes their contribution. The first pilot project is being developed now in the South Bronx in New York. This project will be one of the many that will be presented by young adults at a major interfaith event for all ages in Capetown, South Africa in December, organised by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

Sharing our religious traditions can also be done very simply and locally. We can join in the celebrations of particular religious festivals with people of a different faith tradition form our own. Many of our IARF member groups have found that this has been a successful way of fostering friendships, building up trust and learning about other religious traditions. My Muslim friend in Leeds invited me to join them for a meal when they broke their fast at Eid. I was able to sit and listen to their prayers and then the younger children proudly printed out from their computer an English translation of some of the verses of the Qur'an that had been recited earlier.

Young people the world over have shown they feel a need to seek and maintain a sense of identity and self worth. This can help to counter the significant problems that they come across in their daily lives. Therefore not only their spiritual heritage, but also their culture now plays a significant role in their lives. The eighty participants in an IARF young adult program in Vancouver, Canada this summer came from many nations and faith traditions and were very fortunate to be given an insight into First Nations culture and spirituality. Towards the end of the program, Aaron Nelson-Moody from the Squamish nation pressed a piece of carved wood in the shape of a paddle into the hand of each young person and taught them to make a paddle necklace. He told them not to let them touch the ground. When asked "Why"? he responded, "Take care of our culture and traditions. Don't let them fall to the ground where they may be forgotten or trampled upon". I was greatly honoured to be invited to attend a First Nations young adult conference in August in Vancouver. With great pride the Squamish youth learned to make drums and weave cedar bark, traditions that were once such an important part of their lives. Spiritual songs and

prayers were an integral part of the event. In his autobiography, Chief Simon Baker of the Squamish nation says, "We have gone too long in the wrong direction. We were a spiritual people. We paid great homage to our Creator and we must get back to that way of thinking. Spirituality, culture and language must be emphasised for our young people to know who they are. Education is the tool for self-determination. We need lawyers, developers and managers, but it will take time. First of all, our young people need pride."

The media has a major influence on the lives of young people and so it is important for us to reflect on how our religious communities can be positively portrayed by the media and the young adults given more chances to air their views. Technology such as email has facilitated communication between young people. The computer is still a luxury that many will never have, but from my experience, many young adults are getting access to a computer and enjoy communicating and researching via this medium. The IARF hopes to set up a chatline on the internet between young adults of different faiths. We should not underestimate the outreach that can be achieved through computers.

Young adults are becoming much more aware of the value and wisdom of their elders and are wanting to listen to their teachings and learn from them. The confidence and experience of the elders can complement the energy and optimism of the young. There is also an important role for young leaders from the faith communities who can act as intermediaries between the younger generation and their elders. Younger people often find it easier to relate to these young adult leaders and can be inspired by them. Many of us feel that there is a need for the young leaders from the different faith traditions to be able to meet together, share their experiences and acquire practical skills, such as productive ways to raise funds. Over time, they can establish friendships and try to solve problems together.

Young adults are distressed by the inequality and injustice they see around the world. They are seriously considering the role they have to play in the future and the relevance of their religious teachings. They are seeing the value of their culture and traditions. They also want to move with the times, not stagnate. Young people want to feel a degree of ownership for what they do. They also need to be supported both materially and spiritually by their elders. There is still a sense of hope about the future. They are willing to talk, but also want to put words into action to bring about a more peaceful world. Young people from different faith traditions can and do play a crucial role and their voices should be heard.

Bibliography

1 Chief Simon Baker, "Khot-la-Cha", pg 176, Douglas and McIntyre, 1994.

Ms Ramola Sundram
Program Co-ordinator
International Association for Religious Freedom

Future Issues in Governing for Religion and Cultural Diversity in a Global Context

Panel Address, Session One, 2:30pm, Sunday 31st October 1999
The Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference, London

What do we mean by development? - Are we talking about Western-style economic progress, and the concept of "developed" and "undeveloped" countries, measured by the extent to which they have "caught up" with the industrialised countries?

Probably the most important thing to understand is that most people do not understand the world and their place in it according to the technology-driven rationality of the West.

A story which illustrates this point is that of a development organisation which had bought tractors for a village in India. In order to achieve maximum cost effectiveness the professionals running the project ordered everyone to plough by night as well as by day. However, this deeply shocked the people, who believed that to plough after dark was against the laws of God. This objection was swept away by those running the project, as mere superstition, but, as is always the case, lying within the villagers' beliefs, values reasons of another nature are always to be found: tractors at night can keep people awake; night ploughing keeps the men away from their homes; usually it is after dark that people meet to hear stories from the Gita read in the temple. Cost effectiveness as the supreme criterion can lead to a break down of vital social ties.

Development is about much more than economics. If cultural identity and spiritual beliefs are not regarded as an equally essential ingredient as economic progress, people will either be alienated from the development process or they will lose their identity.

So what are the practical consequences?

Let's look, for example, at systems of justice. Whose justice systems are adopted? Why should it be better to throw a thief into prison than ask him or her to give back what she or he has stolen? It isn't just a question of translating court proceedings but of having a justice system which is meaningful to the majority, e.g. in Guatemala, where the Mayan majority understand justice processes as repairing wrongs, rather than excluding people from the community. The aim is to strengthen the community and keep it together. Justice systems will only work if they correspond to the values of the people into whose lives they are supposed to bring law and order.

Or let's consider systems of education. If a child is told that her parents' beliefs are superstition, their knowledge (e.g. of local medicines) is witchcraft and her clothes are unacceptable, it is unlikely she will go through the school system with much confidence or success. The values taught in schools and the whole approach to education is intimately linked to the material poverty which ensues for those who don't fit the established norms.

If we take this into account, then we can't hand out single recipes to combat poverty, even within one country. Moreover, it is quite clear that development programmes which are drawn up without the participation of the people who will be involved are highly likely to fail.

The World Bank realises that it will not be able to achieve the international development targets to which it has agreed (e.g. to halve world poverty by the year 2015) on its own. As

its president, James Wolfensohn, said at the annual meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in September, "coalitions for change" are essential, if we are to make a difference. After 50 years, the World Bank has come to realise that its own culture must change.

But to join in with this debate, the religions, too, need to look at their own practices as far as dealings with the poor go.

When we were gathering up ideas from the various religions about criteria for development policies and practice, there was no overall consensus, but there was agreement on many issues, one of which was that self-transformation is necessary to achieve institutional or social transformation. This implies a constant process. We can never afford to stay still where we are.

Religious organisations need to review their own practice:

- they often fall into patronising attitudes often linked to control sometimes their work in development projects having a strong element of self-interest

    e.g. wanting to recruit the poor

- religious institutions can be as guilty as any others of corruption and misuse of power

    e.g. toward women

- religious rivalries lead in the worst cases to civil conflicts, but, in the development field, they also lead to projects which are less effective than they would be were they linked in with others and the isolationist behaviour of individual organisations leads, too, to a waste of resources.

If we are to make a difference we must band together. We must keep a critical awareness, but at the same time be willing to learn from modern techniques, e.g. in planning and evaluation.

Religions are saying to the World Bank that it must take into account local religions and cultures. It is very easy to criticise the World Bank! But many religious communities have themselves been responsible for the exclusion of people from different religions or cultures. If we are to be seen as a relevant force capable of facing up to the most critical issues of our day, we must practise what we preach.

A wonderful story to keep in mind is that of the Swami who, when a mother brought her child to him to ask him to tell the little boy to stop eating sweets, refused to do so. "Go away", he said to the mother, "and come back in two weeks time". The mother was disappointed. She had walked a long way to visit the Swami and she was worried about her child's teeth, but she did as she was asked. In a fortnight's time she turned up again and repeated her request. At once the Swami turned to the boy and said "Don't eat any more sweets. They are very bad for your teeth. Stop all sweet-eating from today". "Thank you Swamiji", said the grateful mother, "but could you tell me why you made me come all this way a second time in order to tell my child that? Why couldn't you have told him the same when I came two weeks ago?" The Swami looked at her gravely and replied "Because two weeks ago I was eating sweets myself."

Ms Wendy Tyndale

Co-ordinator
World Faiths Development Dialogue

I am grateful to respond to our colleague's paper on the contributions made to multiculturalism by the social sciences. Critical analysis is essential to dialogue. In its own way, it enlarges the vision of global ethics as propounded by Hans Küng

No human life together
without a world ethic for the nations.
No peace among the nations
without peace among the religions.
No peace among the religions
without dialogue among the religions.

Surely, this mirrors our conference today.

More: in our work together, we have come to recognise that religion does not possess a monopoly in terms of ethical imperatives. Scientific integrity and our identity within democracies are linked to religion. Let me cite a political leader here in his expression of religious faith:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity…but we have forgotten God…Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace - too proud to pray to the God who made us! It behoves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and pray for clemency and forgiveness."

I realise that these words sound curiously old-fashioned in this time and place, when the agonies of the 20th century have humbled us in so many ways. But, then, this speech was given as a proclamation of a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer in 1863 by Abraham Lincoln. In England, we are currently debating a National Holocaust Memorial Day, even though many in the Jewish community feel that our Yom Ha-Shoah helps us recall our loved ones, and that a National Memorial should be dedicated to ALL the victims of that dark time. It is a reminder that we must all share the pain of a past which has scarred us wherever we live, and that we meet here to deal with the imperfections of a world which we have helped to create. I am grateful that the sciences acknowledge the vision of religion as a basic aspect of our society, and that religious leaders, in turn, recognise that we work together out of many disciplines. Clearly, and particularly in this forum, we must recongnise the need to mobilise science and technology to address the crises of public health, agricultural productivity, I *will not indulge in a discussion of French or British farming here:* or environmental degradation, or demographic stresses. But, on all of these issues, the voice of religion must also be heard. In dark times, confronting brutality, we need to receive comfort, and to give comfort. When gunmen enter a parliament and kill the elected leaders of a nation, it is well to remind ourselves of this.

Two weeks ago, I was in Prague as a participant in FORUM 2000, led by Elie Wiesel and President Vaclav Havel, where we discussed the vision of a developing world at the edge of a millennium. It was fascinating to listen to a former Polish dissident, Adam Michnik, who

viewed the history of his country after the long time of conflict. He noted that Poland had to learn a new geo-policy in which it learnt that it was no longer in conflict with its neighbours. A new ethos of Polish solidarity was arising, which he called *the ethos of those who bear the burden of others*. A religious dimension enters here. I took part in a symposium on the role of religion, and led a multi-religious service in the cathedral. Yet what impressed me most was the contribution of the political leaders and their understanding of the need to develop an infrastructure which can develop the quality of people's lives. A culture of compassion and openness is essential here, and an awareness of human rights. I particularly appreciated the words of HRH El Hassan bin Talal, who pointed out that

"Sociologists tell us that every individual plays a multiplicity of roles related to the family, the workplace and a host of communities ranging from the religious to the political: We all possess diverse and divergent identities that make us unique. The same thing may be said about states, or even empires-although, curiously enough, it is less true of nations"

Prince Hassan has frequently visited the Leo Baeck College, where we were able to have dialogues between Islam and Judaism. We have come to see that religious communities are essential in a structure where economic disputes tend to dismiss religious insights which can actually bring solutions to the problems which tear countries apart. In the Bible, we already find 'portal to portal pay', the rights and dignity which belong to unempowered members of our society, and the authority given to the prophets as they confront unjust rulers. Every human being is unique; each one has a contribution to make. Often, but not always, it is the religious identity which comes into play here. And, since these religious identities – most of the time - transcend boundaries, they can create links within societies in conflict with one another.

We return to Hans Küng here, who pointed out that religions must be at peace with one another. It is difficult to achieve this in societies where one religion has established itself through an agreement with authority where it can use secular power to achieve dominance over others beliefs. In Israel, for example, there is religious freedom and co-operation with other religions; but, inside Judaism, no divergences are permitted. Still, Progressive Judaism has begun to flourish. In Great Britain, there are still aspects of what *used* to be one of our long words in parlour games: antidisestablishmentarianism. Religions alongside the Church of England need acts of Parliament to establish themselves to serve their faith communities. Sometimes, this works to our advantage: our rabbis cannot officiate at inter-faith weddings. Yet we are happy within this national structure, and can pray for the Queen at our services *(this is a private political statement)*.

The special vision which religion brings to a democratic society, which has become aware of the many cultures within its fabric, is that we live between the past and the future. In that life, in this present, as Matthias Koenig says, we possess a legal personhood and participate in democratic polity. We bring religious insights to this process.

The values and insights of tradition cannot be ignored; and the image of a better future must indicate the flaws of the present. The messianic dreams of religion have often become secular utopias, particularly in Marxism but also in most political platforms. Religion not only wants to change society: it also demands that human being change; and that they CAN change. This should enter our deliberations. Short range plans cannot afford to lose sight of the distant future; and, in our faith, we can shore up an optimism which this world has lost. Ultimately, we reject Matthew Arnold's view of the Sea of Faith, once furl'd around earth's shore like a bright girdle, but not, in his hearing, as a

Melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Religion, in a world of darkness, must re-assert hope. Martin Buber <u>did</u> say a Hassidic word:

We must not worry. Only one worry is permissible: a person should worry because they are worrying.

I question this with some sadness. Religion must also bring us anguish, pain and discontent. Religion remains us of evil in the world and of evil in ourselves. And how can we love others unless we understand their pain? How can nations enjoy their wealth when other nations labour under crushing debts which they can never re-pay? <u>Justice, justice shall ye pursue</u> is the enduring Biblical message. The culture of peace demands non-exclusive religions.

And there are so many other enduring insights of faith. However, I <u>have</u> learned that when one has been asked to give a reply, one has NOT been asked to give a long paper. Let me therefore close by thanking you for the privilege of learning from you at this time.

And perhaps we will all learn from one another.

Rabbi Dr Albert H. Friedlander
Dean, Leo Baeck College, London
President, WCRP UK

Future Issues in Governing for Religion and Cultural Diversity in a Global Context

**Panel Address, Session Two, 4:00pm, Sunday 31st October 1999
The Second Religion and Cultural Diversity Conference, London**

In 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá, then Head of the Bahá'í community, spoke in Paris about the beauty and harmony that is to be found in diversity:

> Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin. All the differences that appear are those of outward form and colour. This diversity of type is apparent throughout the whole of nature.

Of course, this diversity is rooted in a transcendent unity:

> Yet all these flowers, shrubs and trees spring from the self-same earth, the same sun shines upon them and the same clouds give them rain.

> So it is with humanity. It is made up of many races, and its peoples are of different colour…but they all come from the same God, and all are servants to Him.

It is the very diversity and variety of the plants that constitutes the charm of the garden:

> …each flower, each tree, each fruit, beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.

> Thus should it be among the children of men! The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord.

We need also to welcome diversity of opinion:

> Likewise, when you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do not turn away your face from them. All are seeking truth, and there are many roads leading thereto. Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one[i]

We live in an extraordinary time in human history. We have reached the limits of our planet and we are forced to live together, to recognise each other's humanity. It is a time of transition. We, the peoples of the world, are moving from our collective childhood, through a tempestuous and difficult adolescence, to our collective adulthood. Humankind is coming of age and new capacities are awakening in us.

Like it or not, our world is becoming one place. If we were to wake up tomorrow to find that all international agreements and arrangements had been rescinded we would, I think, be deeply shocked. We take for granted the level of international co-operation that allows us to travel across the world, to pick up the telephone to speak to our friends in Australia, to send them an e-mail or a letter, and to eat kangaroo steaks.

---

[i] 'Abdu'l- Bahá, _Paris Talks,_ pp.51-54

This transition is a spiritual, as well as a historical, social, political and economic process. We are undergoing vast changes in our consciousness. It is true that the changes in our conscious, in the way we regard each other, are lagging behind the technological changes. We still play nationalist games over beef, but the reality is that, inexorably and ineluctably, we are being pushed and pulled into a new world, one in which the boundaries and identities of old are assuming a secondary importance. Now we can - and must - seriously begin to think of ourselves as global citizens, even if there is no such form of legal personhood-yet.

We all, whatever our nationality, our ethnicity, our gender or our faith, face one central challenge: that of laying the foundations of a global society which reflects the oneness of human nature. I suggest that it is only within a strong framework of unity, based on a deep seated recognition of our oneness, that diversity can safely flourish and contribute that beauty and harmony to which 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred back in 1912.

I am not suggesting that the transitions we are going through are easy for us. The challenges are enormous, just as they are for any adolescent individual. In some respects we are still children, looking back with yearning to the certainties that were ours as we grew up. In others we are like adolescents, reacting against things past, angry with our parents, but not really knowing who we are.

What, then, should people of faith and religious leaders be doing as this transition happens? Can we make a real and positive difference?

Firstly, I think we must work together. We must work together for the good of the whole of humankind. I want to put on record at this point my appreciation of the effective work being done by a range of interfaith organisations and academic institutions in the United Kingdom, and across the world - these are facilitating increased understanding between faith communities as well as collaboration on a range of practical projects. The Parliament of the World's Religions that will be taking place in Capetown in December is one obvious sign of this. But this collaboration requires us to make difficult choices and, perhaps, to sacrifice some of our cherished goals and ambitions.

Secondly, our communities and our leaders must recognise that our world is plural in religion as it is in ethnicity and culture. We have to counter religious fanaticism and hatred to which the Bahá'í scriptures refer as 'a world devouring fire, whose violence none can quench'.[ii] The Bahá'í scriptures commend us to 'Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship'[iii]; by doing so we exemplify for all the welcoming of unity in diversity that is an essential part of the new world.

Thirdly, our communities can help remind everyone of certain truths about human life, human being and human becoming: that this world is not all that there is, that there is a deep-flowing oneness under our diversity, and that we, whether we be rank and file members of our communities or among the leadership, are in the world to serve our fellow human being.

I'd like to close with a rousing call to a new spiritual vision and a new human conduct that came from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the years before the First World War:

> For this reason must all human beings powerfully sustain one another and seek for everlasting life…Let them purify their sight and behold all humankind as leaves and blossoms and fruits of the tree of being. Let them at all times concern themselves

[ii] Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf,* p.14.
[iii] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings form the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh,* p. 95.

with doing a kindly thing for one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help. Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.[iv]

The Honourable Barnabas Leith
Secretary General
Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom

[iv] 'Abdu'l- Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l- Bahá,* p. 1.