

MCCBCHS (四大宗教咨询理事会)



Interreligious Assembly for The New Millennium

MCCBCHS is playing an important role in the building of interreligion harmony in the country. We recognize the responsibility that religions have to shape the future, a task that involves letting go of past mistakes and seeking new ways of going forward.



MCCBCHS believes that this message is important for all of us especially for Malaysians. We share the conviction that people of world religions can make a positive impact on our troubled world.

The following is the message from the two hundred participants, from some fifty countries and representing some twenty different religious traditions, who gathered in the Vatican City, 25-28 October 1999.

Dialogue

Dialogue is the accepted path of collaboration to form a better society for humankind. We hope that the followers of the various religious traditions will collaborate with already existing interreligious organizations in the world to promote mutual understanding through dialogue at all levels.

The process of reconciliation and the exact forms of collaboration will depend on the local or regional context. Some suggestions are:

- keep in communication with each other on a regular basis, and especially in crisis or conflict situations;
- try to work together to prevent stemming, hatred and violence, instead labour to promote mutual love;
- help the media to present positive values, through direct collaboration in programmes and through appeals;
- work together to help overcome injustice and poverty, and deprivation of human dignity.

Particular attention needs to be paid to respecting the others' self definition of their own religious identify It is also important to be sensitive to the particular social, cultural, and religious contexts in which interreligious relations take place.

Proselytizing, using unethical means like incentives, to", deceit, ate contrasts painfully with the respect which needs to prevail among religious traditions People may be urged to commend their faith to others above all by the way they live, by the quality of their actions and their care for others Real conversion is not something which one person effects in another , but is a process which involves open nose to God and openness to change in oneself We rejoice that we have striven to truly understand each other and express ourselves in love and respect.

Spirituality

Fully aware that we need divine help, we are very grateful to God (some would prefer to say to the Supreme Being while others would not mention God at all) for the strength required to live out our commitments.

Through prayer and meditation we open ourselves to the divine and to one another We also develop inner resources for self-control, for mind-transforming experience so as to overcome emotional wounds and preconceived ideas. This spiritual healing can also lead to reconciliation of peoples that will wipe out revenge, a spiritual malaise Prayer and meditation help to bring to the surface transcendental values which can then be shared They overcome enmity and are a source of peace They should flow into ethical action for justice and peace and never be a substitute for such action.

The faithful practice of the teachings of the religious traditions is vital to a vigorous our spiritual life which is essential for dialogue.

Mindfulness and self consciousness help to counter materialism and load to a simplification of needs. The accent is wrong when it is on "having" rather than 'being.' This latter emphasis will simplify the noble goals of our lives.

Education

Education is a key for promoting interreligious harmony, religious freedom, and respect for people of different traditions. It involves not simply an intellectual knowledge of other traditions so as to overcome ignorance but even more so, an appreciation of the other that leads to authentic listening and genuine steam It will be most effective if it becomes a channel for interpersonal encounter among religious people Education in

thanksgiving, giving and forgiving can also have an impact on interreligious and intercultural dialogue. It will endeavour to reach the grassroots so that future generations can avoid the mistakes of the past. This task must begin with the very young and continue throughout life. Above all, education is committed to seeking truth, justice, peace and reconciliation.

A very practical programme, which already exists in various places, is the joint examination of textbooks, not only of religion, but also and perhaps especially of history. The lamentable ignorance and misinformation, together with the stereotyping of children concerning other people's religious traditions, needs to be rectified. This underlines the need to let religious traditions speak for themselves. We must strive to present all religious traditions in an objective manner so that individuals belonging to these traditions can recognize themselves in that representation,

As we study the history of other religious traditions as well as of our own, we confess that much has gone wrong in the past. We may recognize and acknowledge these wrongs, express our sorrow about them and condemn what deserves condemnation. We commit ourselves to try to do everything in our power so that such actions and omissions are not repeated. Such steps can foster a process of understanding and reconciliation.



Working for a better world

Religions have great power to influence their adherents to work for a better world. Spiritual values are needed to be the foundation for justice, righteousness and respect for the intrinsic dignity of every human being in an increasingly secular world that dehumanizes and treats individuals as means for greater profit.

We appeal to, and am ready to work with, people of influence to safeguard freedom of

conscience and freedom of worship.

A balance is necessary between the power of science and technology, on the one hand, and ethical and religious values, on the other. Religion is necessary to provide the knowledge of ends wherein we respect the ethical core of every human being. This also requires a family, a community, a civil society that promote the values of truthfulness, trust and mutual respect.

We must engage in joint action for the poor, and for a just political and economic system that does away with all forms of violence. This implies a concerted action against the sale of arms, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and all instruments of total destruction in order to bring about a true harmony between human beings and the world. We are committed to seek truth, justice, reconciliation and peace as a basis for nonviolent communities.

We have no choice but to work with influential organizations. There is no need to feel powerless in the face of business, which clearly benefits when religions unite to work for the common good. We must speak out concerning injustice, the problems of poverty and population.

There is a need to work together with the various organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, in favor of the weakest in society. Our religious leaders can play a great role in achieving this end. A cry has gone out from this assembly that we are all united in our refusal to allow religion to be used to justify violence and hatred.

Religions should use their best resources to influence the media to draw attention to religious and ethical concerns, and to provide for accurate interreligious information.

We recognize the positive things in modernization and globalization. Nevertheless, we are fully aware also of its negative consequences, e.g., the destruction of the environment. The preservation of nature is vital for the future generations. Those who suffer most from this degradation of nature are the indigenous people. Hence, we are committed to cooperate with all organizations to preserve the integrity of the earth.

Family and Community

The family must be considered as a fundamental building block of society and respected

in its integrity A number of forces such as ethnic conflicts, social upheavals economic embargoes, self-centeredness and the insistence m individual rights at the expense of communal obligations are disruptive of family life Most often the victims are women and children As people of religion we have the obligation to assure the survival of the family and to make it the essential building block of society.

Similarly we must insist on the overruling importance of the common good so there must be a balance between individual nights and duties.

The religions of the word in their mutual relations should present a model of mutual acceptance, respect for truth, and love that can become a non for social and political interrelationships among peoples.

Conclusion

As we enter into the new millennium it is our fervent hope and prayer that through interreligious collaboration a new era of genuine respect, appreciation, and love will prevail. Therefore, we can truly be united.