



Interreligious Dialogue

Also known as interfaith dialogue, interreligious dialogue involves the coming together of two or more dialogue partners, from different religious traditions or worldviews, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is an interactive process of learning and teaching, listening and speaking, offering and receiving. It is expected that while always speaking from the personal experience as a member of the faith tradition or worldview, the knowledge will be shared in a way that enables the other party to understand the belief system from a more informed perspective. The goal of interreligious dialogue is never the conversion of the other party, but an enriched understanding of life and faith issues, greater empathy and social awareness, an expanded horizon and a more inclusive approach to life.

Some Guiding Principles When Working in the Field of Interreligious Dialogue

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- The world in which we live and work is one of religious pluralism, therefore new frontiers in religious learning are opening up.
- Interreligious dialogue will only be successful if one religion recognises the possible presence of *truth* in another religion.
- Use of “home tradition” a helpful term in comparing religious understandings. The home tradition then looks at what it can learn from others, rather than what others can learn from it.
- No religion has ever developed in a vacuum. Religions have always been influenced by others and learned something for themselves.
- Engage in learning that emphasize the ‘particularity’ of a religious tradition, rather than generalities, and use the specific terms of that tradition. This can offer new theological interpretations, stretching followers beyond religious boundaries and offering the possibility to think differently.

Questions to consider:

- Is the learning seeking to evoke deep understanding, or another way of merely 'tolerating' the other?
- Does the learning offer ways to collaborate with other religious traditions in order to live more peacefully in a globalised and polarised world?
- Does interreligious dialogue offer a way to combat destructive narratives?
- Pope Francis suggests asking- how can we do things that are universal and yet transformative?

Chia, E. (2018). *World Christianity Encounters World Religions: A Summa of Interfaith Dialogue*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press Academic.