

The Relevance of Religion, Today The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue

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1. Introduction: Is Religion Redundant or Relevant?

Ever since the Enlightenment and thereafter, religion has lost ground in the public sphere. If not in the East and South, at least in what was formerly called the ‘Christian West’, many nations have relegated religion to the private sphere. Less said about religion, the better! Fortunately, this esteemed institution has had the good sense to have an “*International Symposium on the Relevance of Religion, Today;*” and, there are representatives here from the major religions who will speak about the relevance of their respective religions. As a theologian, I must confess with a modicum of embarrassment, that theologians have, over the years, been accused of being fairly truthful, but rarely relevant. I shall try to be both! But, first, let us define the terms of our discourse.

2. Definitions and Clarification of Terms:

The word ‘religion’ finds its etymological roots in two Latin words: first, *religare*, which means ‘to bind’ or ‘establish links’. Religion binds / links one to God, to other human beings and to mother earth: Nature. Second, it also stems from *relegere*, meaning, re-read, interpret the Mystery called God, Brahman, Ultimate Being, etc. Although we can never understand the mystery of God fully, we have the faculty of reason and the facility of language, by which we try to express in and through human symbols, myths, narratives, etc., ultimate truths about life, death, birth, cosmic origins and destiny. In this regard, all religions give us insights into the Ultimate Reality or Absolute Being and map out pathways by which we can reach the ultimate goal or terminus of life—called salvation, *mukti*, moksha, nirvana, etc.

Besides trying to understand what religion is from its etymological roots, we have definitions of religion given by religionists and sociologists alike. J. Milton Yinger defines religion as: “A system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people

struggles with the ultimate problems of life.”¹ Postmodern thinker John D. Caputo writes: “Religion is fundamentally a defiant gesture. It speaks in the name of life and against the powers that demean and degrade life. It does not arise negatively from a rejection, but affirmatively, from an affirmation of life, from the momentum and energy of life itself.”² Thus, we take religion to be: (a) basically, community-activity, (b) dealing with ultimate meaning, (c) enabling humankind to address life’s problems, (d) containing life-affirming energy that, as we have seen, ‘binds’ or ‘links’ believers to each other, to all of creation, and to an Absolute, often called God.

We could make further distinctions between religion and faith, as well as between religion and spirituality. One often hears the comment: “I am a spiritual person, but I do not follow any religion.” From this statement it is clear that while religion is understood as organized and structured around beliefs, rites, rituals, and sets of do’s and don’ts, spirituality is the deeper, undergirding realm of the spirit, by which acknowledges that one is not just a material being, but one has the faculties of self-reflection, conscience, and awareness of some ‘sacredness’ that abides within us and impregnates all human beings to bear fruits of loving, caring, sharing, concern for the other and so on.

Like spirituality, faith is also difficult to define. In fact, there is only one definition of faith in the Bible: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Normally, people who are religiously inclined are regarded as having ‘faith’. However, in the broadest sense, an atheist and an agnostic too might claim to have faith—for example, in humankind or in oneself, without giving any ultimate meaning to this kind of faith. In this sense we also speak of ‘trust’—a kind of confidence upon which our everyday life is built, without which it would be impossible to live beside and with each other.

3. Contours and Colours of Religion in India

Although our Constitution describes India as a ‘secular state’, we must note that the word ‘secularism’ is understood differently in the West and in India. In many Western societies of Europe and the USA, secularism refers to the principled stance of the state to stay away from any public manifestation of religion. In other words, there is a

clear division between ‘religion’ and ‘politics’ with the former relegated to the private domain, and the latter entrusted to the systems and structures of the state like the Parliament, the judiciary, etc., and elected representatives like ministers, presidents and parliamentarians. Questions about secularism, and whether such a clear-cut division between religion and politics is possible and advisable, are being debated at present with diverse views.³ By contrast, secularism in India simply means that no one religion is privileged over the other.

There has been a long history of secularism in India, spearheaded by two broad streams and two eminent statesmen: (a) Nehru and the Nehruvian, and, (b) Gandhi and the Gandhian. Nehru desired to divorce religion from politics and keep the state neutral towards all forms of religion (*dharma nirpekshata*), while Gandhi intended that all religions be treated with equal respect (*sarva dharma samābhava*) while seeking reform within the framework of Brahmanical Hinduism. Without going into details of these two strands, Indian secularism has been characterized not only by its tolerance of all religious traditions, but also by its quest to further all that is good and true in all religions. This has led to religions in India having a kind of ‘totalizing character’⁴ that encompasses every realm of the life of most Indians. This is seen in many ways, as follows:

First, in almost every state in India, we see prolific manifestations of religious practice. For instance, at daybreak, one hears the cries of the *muheddin*’s *azhan* inviting Muslims to start the first *namaz* of the day. This blends with the clanging of temple bells as Hindu devotees, after their morning ablutions, perform the *surya namaskar*, chant the *Gayatri mantra* and go with their *thalis* containing offerings for the deity, part of which will gratefully be consumed as *prasadam*. In areas inhabited by many Christians, one hears the pealing of church bells as believers proceed for morning worship or the celebration of Mass, while Buddhist monks might practice *vipassana* in silence. Besides the religious practices of these major religious traditions, there’s the strong presence of the so-called ‘little’ religious traditions like the subaltern, popular, *bhakti* and folk religious traditions that have their unique worldviews, distinct ways of worship, sustaining spiritualities, pantheons of *devas-devis*, and so on.

Second, besides group or community expressions of religion, we have individual expressions of indoor devotions carried on in Indian households: the lighting of *diyas* (earthen oil lamps), the burning of candles and *agarbattis* (incense-sticks) before images of deities, the veneration of icons and images of deities with floral-*malas*, the smearing of sacred ashes or holy water and oil on the forehead, the wearing of medals-bracelets-amulets, the reciting of rosaries/beads, the setting aside of a little food for ancestral spirits, and so on. These indoor devotions often overflow into outdoor individual, symbolic actions like closing one's eyes while facing the rising sun and bowing reverently to it, or bowing one's head respectfully as one passes a *mandir*, *masjid*, *gurudwara* or chapel, or tossing a coin into a river while crossing over-bridge by bus or by train, or placing one's palms downward on a *durgah* or *samadhi* of a holy person and then placing them upon one's forehead as an invocation for blessing, and so on.

Third, at what might be called a 'sociocultural level' of religious expression, although supported by religious myths and symbols, Indians celebrate with great fanfare festivals like *Holi* with its riot of colours, *Diwali* with its *diyas* and firecrackers; and, often Christmas, too, even if naively equating it only with Santa Claus festivity. Moreover, in many Indian states, cyclical celebrations coinciding with the moods and rhythms of Mother Nature are celebrated by all; for e.g., *Baisakhi* of Punjab, *Makar Sankranti* of Gujarat, *Ugadi* of Andhra Pradesh, *Onam* of Kerala, *Pongal* of Tamil Nadu and so on. These celebrations are not specific or limited to one particular religious community or the other, but are universally celebrated and bring communities together as few other occasions and events do. Thus, the expression of religion in public has rarely been a problem in India, except, of course, when religious symbols are used—or, rather abused—to murder and maim, ironically, in God's name!

4. Commonalities of All Religions: The Four "C's"

From all we have elaborated earlier, we can conclude that all religions—big and small—are characterized by four C's: (i) Creed, (ii) Cult, (iii) Conduct, and (iv) Community. The creed comprises of scriptures, teachings and beliefs that propose ultimate truths. The cult comprises of prayers, rites, rituals and *sanskaras* that one

must perform to connect with the Ultimate. Conduct is concerned about morals and ethics—the do's and don'ts for upright, moral living. Finally, every religion conceives of some form of community: *Ram Rajya* (Hinduism), *Sangha* (Buddhism), *Umma* (Islam) and the Kingdom of God (Christianity).

Every religion's creed, cult, conduct and community provide meaning not only for everyday life, but also for the afterlife. Positively, this has enabled believers to be open-minded before Truth, to symbolically ritualize events like birth, marriage and death, to lead moral lives and to build community. This can be called the '*power of religion*'. These are the fields which must be tapped to bring out the best in religious belief and practice. However, one must realize that there is wide diversity, if not divergence, among the religious beliefs and practices of different religions. Hence, the need for tolerance, as a very basic step, and respect and dialogue as one progressively begins to see the good and truth in other religions.

On the negative side, religion is susceptible to manipulation since, by positing an invisible Ultimate as the sole authority and arbitrator of religious activity, many self-appointed religionists or self-proclaimed saviours manipulate people and enjoy power, privileges and pleasures scarce related to religion. Such '*religion of power*', so to say, must be critiqued and crushed, or else it will create conflict and chaos in India. We do see many instances of this.

While one strives to understand the creed and cult of another religion, it is always difficult to feel totally at ease in participating in these two realms of religion. For instance, a Muslim will love reading the Quran, but is not likely to feel deeply attached to the Bhagavad Gita and the Bible. Moreover, a Hindu might admire the story of Jesus but will not feel at ease participating in the Eucharist or praying at a masjid. And, a Christian, might practice yoga as a discipline, but might not agree with its religious underpinnings or feel at ease participating in some *pooja* or *namaz*. But, when it comes to Life and Community, there are more possibilities of common endeavours. For example, amidst the darkness and death of a tsunami or flood, people get together to help victims irrespective of their religion. Furthermore, for those who are sincere in their religious practice, the best way to collaborate among religions is in the area of

conduct and community. Thus, they will be eager to form communities of peace, happiness, prosperity and justice for all people—especially the poorest of poor irrespective of whether one is to call such communities Sangha, Umma, Ram Rajya, or Kingdom of God. Moreover, as we shall soon see, there are certain values which are common to all religions, such as love, compassion, concern for others and the like.

In sum, despite irreconcilable diversities in creed and cult, the ethics of diverse religions unanimously prescribe love, peace, justice, service, sacrifice and compassion as ideals that all must strive for. Debates on beliefs and rituals are useless since we usually compare the best of ‘my-our’ religion with the worst of ‘your-their’ religion; and, we often pigeonhole religions into prejudiced conceptions of how we see them rather than on what they actually are. Religion will be relevant and beneficial to society only if we engage in initiatives that benefit all people beyond the confines of creed, caste and culture. A good example would be the Sikh ‘*langar*’ where all people—irrespective of class, caste and creed—are fed. Such an initiative powerfully symbolises human equality and our eagerness to eradicate hunger.

5. Religion in Global Society: Clash? Or, Challenge?

In the light of the commonalities that we see among religions, we are still aware that problems persist. Today, religion is assuming newer avatars in global society. There are the pessimists who see that religion is going to lead to further violence and bloodshed. Samuel Huntington’s celebrated ‘clash of civilizations’ book subtitled ‘remaking of the world order’ is disturbing simply because no sensible ‘world order’ will be possible if his ill-conceived ‘clash of civilizations’ becomes a reality.⁵ More disturbing is the fact that we will be condemned to live life in our tiny religio-cultural ghettos fearful that religion will be used like some dynamite destructive of both, Life and Community. But, isn’t religion the ‘bind’ that unifies everything and everyone, and the ‘*dharma*’ that sustains the order of our cosmos, the care of which is entrusted to every woman, man and child? Can we not tap our religio-cultural resources to counteract clashes and create communities that not merely tolerate each other, but positively foster each other’s welfare and growth? I believe we can, provided we prudently graft religion onto public life so as to enable societies to flower and fructify.

In his book *'Religion and Globalisation'* Peter Beyer distinguishes between 'function' and 'performance' as regards the role of religion in global society. 'Function' refers to religion addressing intra-communitarian matters, whereas 'performance' occurs when religion applies itself to problems that emerge in the larger landscape of nation and world.⁶ To give a current example, when Pope Francis or the Dalai Lama exhorts Christians and Buddhists, respectively, to have a greater devotion to the Eucharist or to spend more time in spiritual disciplines like *vipassana*, they are in the realm of 'function' since they are addressing the believers in their own religions. However, when Pope Francis addresses lawmakers in the US or at the UNO, or when the Dalai Lama addresses University students on global issues like ecology, peace, justice, cooperation, etc., they are at the level of 'performance'. Religions must realize that they will be effective only if they serve other subsystems in society. They can also act as a critique of fanaticism and fundamentalism.

In a country like India, which is a socialist, secular democracy, each religion must uphold every dictate of its Constitution since this is a 'sacred document', so to say, that has been drawn up after deep deliberations, discussions and debates. The Constitution should never be tampered with, and democracy should not be destroyed by any form of *majoritarianism* (dominance of a majority group), as well as *minoritarianism* (appeasement of a minority group). For nation-states, the Constitution is the prime 'political symbol' of a federation of peoples that guarantees all individuals and communities their rights; and, if the nation is to function smoothly, then, this Constitution must legally bind all citizens irrespective of creed, class, caste, culture or other communitarian differences. Once the stipulations of the Constitution are enforced, multi-religious societies like ours should strive to ensure that the religio-cultural resources of communities are recognized and respected.

6. Interfaith Dialogue as the Need of the Hour

The word 'dialogue' comes from two Latin words '*dia*' which means 'through' and '*logos*' which means 'word'. Interreligious dialogue, also referred to as interfaith dialogue, is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their

differences. The term refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, (i.e. ‘faiths’) at both the individual and institutional level. Each party remains true to their own beliefs while respecting the right of the other to practise their faith freely. Interfaith dialogue is not just words or talk. It includes human interaction and relationships. It can take place between individuals and communities and on many levels. For example, between neighbours, in schools and in our places of work—it can take place in both formal and informal settings. Normal life means that we come into daily contact with each other. Dialogue therefore, is not just something that takes place on an official or academic level only—it is part of daily life during which different cultural and religious groups interact with each other directly, and where tensions between them are the most tangible.⁷

Ever since Vatican Council II, the Catholic Church has advocated interreligious dialogue as a way to bring about unity and peace among all peoples. Two documents went a long way in strengthening the bonds of fellowship and dialogue with people of other religions: (a) The ‘Declaration on Religious Liberty’—called ‘*Dignitatis Humanae*’—and, (b) The ‘Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions’—called ‘*Nostra Aetate*’. The Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC), as well as the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) have been actively promoting interfaith dialogue. At the very first meeting in Manila in 1970, the Asian Bishops made their fundamental option clear: “We pledge ourselves to an open, sincere and continuing dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other great religions of Asia, that we may learn from one another how to enrich ourselves spiritually and how to work more effectively together on our common task of human development.”

Pope Francis is a keen advocate of interfaith dialogue. I quote his words:⁸

Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities. [...] In this dialogue, ever friendly and sincere, attention must always be paid to the essential bond between dialogue and proclamation, which leads the Church to maintain and intensify her relationship with non-Christians. [...] True openness involves remaining steadfast in one’s deepest convictions, clear

and joyful in one's own identity, while at the same time being "open to understanding those of the other party" and "knowing that dialogue can enrich each side". [...] Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another.

There are other papal documents like *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si'* where he addresses not only Christians, but all peoples of goodwill.

7. Compassion and Selflessness as Core Religious Concerns

In interfaith dialogue, we must stress what is common to religions and even acceptable to those who practise no religion whatsoever. Compassion is the confluence where all creeds can congregate and construct some form of global community. Compassion, from the Latin *cum-patior*, refers to a 'suffering with' someone or something. Although grammatically passive in construction, the word suggests an active involvement in the sufferings of others, as for example, in the Greek *splangchizomai* that refers to a 'churning of the insides'—a powerful emotion that inevitably leads to effective response. In the Bible the word 'compassion' appears 78 times in 72 verses. It is most commonly predicated of God (Deut 13:17; 2 Kings 13:23) who is praised and worshipped as a loving and compassionate Father-Mother with special care and concern for the poor, the weak and the suffering (Ps 103:13; 106:45; Isa 49:13,15; 54:8; Hos 11:8).

Christianity considers Jesus the compassionate one par excellence who is deeply affected by the plight of his people. Jesus' compassion sensitizes him to the deepest needs of his people. Seeing them as being harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:36), his compassion fructifies in his healing of their illnesses (Mt 14:14; 20:34), his feeding of the hungry multitude (Mk 8:2) and his resuscitation of a widow's son (Lk 7:13). Jesus' compassion is a reflection of his Abba-Father's compassion seen in his love, mercy and forgiveness of the one who suffers and the so-called 'sinner' (Mt 9:13; Lk 15:11-32).

Similar to Judaism and Christianity, Islam teaches that Allah is The Compassionate One. In prayer and meditation, among the ninety-nine names of Allah that are

commonly invoked, are the names *Al-Rahman* and *Al-Rahim*. Both these names are derived from the root *RHM*, referring to a host of meanings including the word for the motherly womb and familial love. *RHM* suggests tenderness, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, mercifulness and benevolence. Since the name *Al-Rahman* does not only mean ‘The Compassionate One’ but also ‘The Source of All Compassion’, no human being can ever be named *Al-Rahman*. At most one can be named *Abd Al-Rahman* or ‘servant of The Compassionate’. Allah also demands that all human beings embrace as many creatures as possible with the bonds of compassion. Indeed, from the Qur’an and the Hadiths of Allah’s Prophet it is clear that dealing with others compassionately is indispensable for salvation. This enjoins on the believer four tasks: (a) to live in gratitude [*shukr*] for Allah’s compassion, (b) to ask for more of Allah’s compassion [*du’a*], (c) to beg forgiveness for one’s forgetfulness and cruelty [*istigfar/tawba*], and (d) to live intensely in mutual compassion [*Tarahum*].

In his book *The Heart of Compassion*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes: “It can be asserted rightly that loving-kindness and compassion are the two cornerstones on which the whole edifice of Buddhism stands.” Indeed, compassion for others is one of the central teachings of Mahayana Buddhism wherein one sacrifices oneself in order to attain salvation for the sake of other beings. Nonetheless, the self is also important since all of existence is regarded as interdependent and unless one has exercised self-restraint and developed self-awareness, one can never expect to reach out in compassion to others. The Buddha preached that one must never neglect one’s own welfare (*attha*), which one must use by analogy to understand what the other’s welfare consists in. Later, one must progress from the limited love of one’s family and friends to the larger love of all creatures and of all of creation. Buddhism thus preaches that compassion (*anukampa*) is a universal ideal without boundary or limitation.

In Sanskrit, the words *karuna* and *dayā* are used as synonyms for compassion. The Brhaspati Smṛti text of classical Hinduism of perhaps the 6th century teaches: “*Atmavat sarvabhutesu yad hitaya sivaya ca / Vartate satatam hrsto kṛtsna hy esa daya smṛta //*” meaning, “Complete love belongs to one who always delights in behaving towards all beings as equal to the self, for their good and for their welfare.” Other Hindu texts like the Raghuvamsa (2.11) and the Hitopadesa (1.60) remind us that

authentic *dayā* is not dependent on the qualities of virtues of the being to which it is addressed: “*Nirgunesv api sattvesu dayam kurvanti sadhavah,*” but is defined as the desire welling up in the heart to remove the hardships of others, even if it implies effort on one’s part. Its semantic field is therefore not that of sentiment but of active desire to help others.

Jainism is another Asian religion that propagates compassion and care for every living being, even microscopic insects. The Jain *jiva dayā* tenet stresses compassion towards everyone and everything. Ancient Jain texts explain that it is the intention to harm, the absence of compassion, which makes an action violent. Without violent thought there can be no violent action. When violence enters one’s thoughts, the Jain is exhorted to remember Lord Mahavir’s words: “You are that which you intend to hit, injure, insult, torment, persecute, torture, enslave or kill.” When one puts oneself into the other’s shoes, so to say, one will desist from harming the other(s). Furthermore, one will positively strive to cultivate an attitude of amity (*maitri*) towards all forms of life.

The Indic focus on respect for life and compassion towards all living beings has inspired renowned leaders like Mahatma Gandhi to translate the ideals of *dayā*, *anukampa* and *karuna* into political praxis by evolving strategies of nonviolence (*ahimsa*). *Ahimsa* inspired the likes of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela, who adopted similar strategies in their own contexts. The principle of *ahimsa* is based on the basic premise that the life of all creatures—especially human beings—is sacred and cannot be destroyed by murder and violence. Nonetheless, in the struggle for justice and truth (*satyagraha*), one must be ready to suffer and bear pain oneself. This is where the idea of self-sacrifice surfaces.

The compassionate one readily dies for the welfare of the other. All religions teach that compassion is an internal, spiritual power based on one’s right relationship with oneself, with others, with all of creation and with God. The power of compassion is unleashed only if one ‘feels’ the suffering of the other as if were one’s own suffering. This first level of feeling or emotion is a form of knowledge that must lead to action. When one feels the others’ pain and suffering, one is moved to alleviate that suffering. Whether one takes action as a result of religious motivation or mere humanism is not

important. What is vital, however, is that through compassionate actions we are able to proclaim to those who suffer that we are ‘with them’. We can build global community upon this bedrock: a stance of solidarity.

8. Interfaith Dialogue and ‘*Triologue*’: The Only Bridge Across Religious Divides

In dealing with the ‘other’, we basically have three options: First, be indifferent to the other—i.e., you do your thing and I’ll do mine. You don’t disturb me and I won’t disturb you. We tolerate each other and there’ll be peace. Such a stance is unbecoming of civilized human beings. Second, is to convert the other at all costs since I am the only one who has the truth. I refuse to listen but I only talk and talk. This will never work in the long run. Third, is the way of dialogue which we have just discussed above; and, I would also add ‘*Tria-logue*’ where we not only listen to the other and try to form some synthesis, but we also realize that besides the ‘two’ of us in dialogue, there is always another option. Such thinking and relating with others makes us humble, open and genuine seekers in the quest for the Divine. God will always remain a Mystery even if we feel that God has fully revealed Godself to us in our different religions.

9. Some Practical Suggestions for Dialogue at the College Level

Having seen the importance of interfaith dialogue, we can think of some practical suggestions which can be implemented at the college level:

1. Celebrate all the religious feasts with posters, decorations and information about that feast. This should be done prior to the day of the feast itself.
2. Invite well-known religionists to speak about religion. However, avoid the fanatics who are not ready to listen to anyone but only seek to convert others.
3. Plan visits to places of worship in small groups with prior arrangement of persons who are in charge of these places.
4. Organize in small groups some sessions of clarifying doubts and prejudices about religion. In such groups be ready to critique all that is wrong in your own religion and listen to all that is good in the other’s religion.

5. Once in a while, have a common interfaith prayer service where religious texts from the different religions are read out.
6. Read the religious columns of dailies: Speaking Tree, Mystic Mantra, Inner Voice, etc
7. Spend some time in silence – either at the start of the day or at the end of the day – for prayer, contemplation, meditation, etc. Get in touch with your deepest self daily.
8. Get familiar with the sacred Scripture of your own religion and read texts of at least one more religion.
9. Be ready to protect religion from fanatics. Speak up for truth, love, peace, justice.
10. Be sensitive to the poorest of poor and the weakest persons who are loved by God.

10. Conclusion: May Religion Bind Us for a Better World

Religion is a powerful source of energy. It can be used or abused. There are many people who ironically kill in God's name! But, can we live as sisters and brothers, all children of God? Gandhi said: "True religion is not a narrow dogma. It is not external observance. It is faith in God and living in the presence of God. It means faith in a future life, in truth and Ahimsa. Religion is a matter of the heart." Let us work join hands and hearts for a better India, and a better world. [End]

ENDNOTES:

- 1 See his *The Scientific Study of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 7.
- 2 In *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 280.
- 3 See, for instance, Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan Van Antwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), for diverse viewpoints of Western authors on secularism.
- 4 T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place," in *Politics in India*, ed. S. Kaviraj (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 344, speaks of the 'totalizing character' of Asia's major religions.

- 5 See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New Delhi: Viking & Penguin Books), 1996, for details.
- 6 See Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 79-81.
- 7 See <http://www.coistine.ie/what-is-interreligious-dialogue>. Assessed on January 26, 2016.
- 8 <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/quotes/pope-francis-on-the-relationship-between-interreligious-dialogue-and-evangelization>.