

## FROM THE CONVENOR

This third issue comes to you at the beginning of Lent, with its call to prepare for the coming Holy Week and Easter. Part of that preparation has traditionally involved "fasting". So we begin with two reflections -from priest-scholars in Malaysia and South India - on what fasting means across the faiths.

Then we hear stories from three countries perhaps not immediately thought of as centres of Inter-Faith activity: Fiji, Solomon Islands and Argentina. In particular, Brother Moses's piece introduces us to dialogue with "primal religion", a worldview central to peoples of varied ethnic backgrounds around the world, yet not always taken into account in Inter-Faith circles.

Another personal testimony comes from Anthapuru-sha, a presbyter in the Church of North India. He believed God was calling him into dialogue. He found himself practising evangelism and baptising converts!

Lastly we learn of an Inter-Faith document which encourages international business people to apply their faith. Is it realistic to expect people of faith to be able to influence the decisions and practice of the world of business?

## A COMMON AGENDA OF MALAYSIANS - LENT/RAMADAN

*"The only thing exclusive for the Malays is the mosque and the Muslim cemetery while the only exclusive for the Chinese is their temple and their cemetery. In everything else, there must be a healthy mix to ensure our survival."*

*A Ibrahim (New Straits Times -Malaysia - 1st January 1995)*

In the above quotation, Anuar Ibrahim, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia identifies the common agenda of Muslims and non-Muslims. Anuar is also a keen student of Islam and other religions. As stated above, there are many things both in religious and secular life common to all religious people of Malaysia. As the Minister says, the common agenda is a healthy mix to ensure our survival.

Malaysia is a plural society. It is multi-racial and multi-religious. Islam is the religion of Malaysia and other religions are allowed to practice. The government also allocates funds for building of worshipping centres for non-Muslims. The needs of the other racial groups are met to some extent.

Muhibbah or goodwill is an important aspect of our corporate culture. We have learnt to live in unity at many different levels and we have never had religious riot or "crusade", to use an historical term, against one another.

Religiously a Hindu might carry a kavadi (a wooden structure) as a token of his thanksgiving to God for himself or for others. He is also concerned about the spiritual welfare of others, so he carries his kavadi or "cross" in Christian terms. This is a form of solidarity for a Hindu. Many devotees, their friends, including non-Hindus, might accompany a person when he/she carries a kavadi.

During the month of Ramadan, Christians and others have been taught to identify themselves with their Muslim friends in a special way. They are taught by their respective religions to respect the sentiments of the Muslims. A non-Muslim exercises patience, understanding when the Muslim community observes their fast. As almost all the Muslims fast, the non-Muslims do not consume food in their presence. When they are weak and tired during fasting, non-Muslims are helpful to them. Others relate in an understanding way. Their conversation could be related to fasting and pertaining to religious matters. Special seminars/talks take place during this time. As the TV and Radio give emphasis to Ramadan, the non-Muslims listen and exercise forbearance and they celebrate on a low profile.

In Mindanao, Philippines, during the holy month of Islam, Christians, especially youths, make special efforts to identify themselves with their Muslim friends. Special T-shirts, and calendars are printed, with the inscription, "Dyog Ramadan", which means "accompanying". It is an invitation to join in the spirit with Muslims, as they observe their fasting month. One of the leaders who was actively involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Philippines said, "The Muslim will sing their songs in their own way; our responsibility as a religion is to provide the accompaniment (background music)." (S. Batumalai, Prophetic Christology p 160)

Let me conclude in the words of Saadi, the famous Persian poet of the lovely city of Shiraz:  
"All men are members of the same body,  
Created from one essence.  
If fate brings suffering to one member  
The others cannot stay at rest.  
You who remain indifferent  
to the burden of the Pain of others  
Do not deserve to be called human."

**Dr S Batumalai Diocese of West Malaysia**

## **HINDUS FAST IN HINDU WAY**

On Fridays meat and fish in the markets of Madurai, the Temple Town of South India, remain on a low key in sales. Occasionally they are cheaper too. The reason is that those Hindus who take non-vegetarian food do not eat meat and fish on Fridays. Even those committed to vegetarian food reduce their in-take on Fridays. "Friday Fast" is a popular term in Tamil.

On a few occasions the Hindu members of our Religious Friends Circle quietly refuse to share in the refreshments. Some have even marked a day in a week on which they abstain from speech. Presumably it is accompanied by fast.

Go a few miles away from Madurai town. Visit a shrine dedicated to Pondy, an ancestor-turned-deity, who demands blood sacrifice. On Fridays and Tuesdays people from the surrounding villages throng there worshipping and sacrificing. On the one hand there is cooking and eating the flesh of the sacrificial victims, goats or cocks. But on the other hand many worshippers go in to a trance-like state subsequent to preparatory fasting. Besides, there are those, possessed by Pondy, who instruct people about what they have to do about the problem they have brought to them. They also seem to have fasted in preparation for assuming this deified role. A few, who mortify their body either by sitting on a bunch of thorns or by locking their mouth with a spear-like little iron rod pierced through the tongue, also fast before during and after the prescribed period.

Those who prepare for a pilgrimage also fast. For example, the devotees of Ayyappa, the ecumenical deity of the Saiva and Vaishnava traditions, who preside over the Sabari Hills in Kerala, fast for forty-one days. Most of them take only lunch and they abstain from smoking, alcohol, sexual inter-course etc.

Hinduism is a complex religion consisting of several traditions, theistic and atheistic, world affirming and ascetic, classical and popular. Therefore it is very difficult to list all the fasts and their methods as they are so flexible and varied. Roughly four major trends may be identified.

Those who follow the Vedic tradition of ritual have a systematic and even artistic eating practice. But fasting is part of the system depending on the particular sub-traditions they belong to and particular stages and occasions in their life. Generally the days of the New Moon and Full Moon are fast days. So also are 10th, 11th and 12th days of each lunar month, particularly on 11th either no meal or one meal. The idea is to participate in the orderly functioning of the universe, as the ritual order was regarded as integrally connected with the universal order and social order in Vedic religion. This kind of fasting is considered as spiritually ordering for life and materially rewarding.

The ascetic tradition was originally external to the ritual tradition although later it was incorporated into it. The ascetics claimed to have acquired extraordinary power by fast and austere practices. Although they were members of Buddhism, Jainism or any one of the many sects of renunciators' movement, their influence on Hindu traditions is evident at different levels. Those who practice yoga, for instance, either abstain from food or reduce the quantity of eating. Such fast helps them to control their bodily and sensory organs and to concentrate on God or Reality depending on their belief and perception.

In Saivism and Vaishnavism, the two major devotional sects of Hinduism, fast is related to mythological stories. For example, the Saivites commemorate the story of Siva swallowing up the mysterious poison that appeared as the gods were churning the milky sea in order to save them. They fast and worship in temples as individuals and groups, twice a month.

As we have already noted, people belonging to the diverse popular cults also fast on various occasions. The days and methods differ according to the prescription of the cults they belong to.

On the whole, fast in Hinduism is considered variously as preparation for a ritual, domestic ceremony or pilgrimage, as an act of penance and fulfilment of vows, as a form of prayer to win the favour of God or Goddess, as a means to control body and senses for obtaining concentration of mind, or as a commemoration of mythological events.

Emphasis and explanations change when people of different faiths share their beliefs and practices of fast. Once, at the end of a Religious Friends Circle Meeting, the Muslim friends shared rice gruel with the members as they were breaking the fast of that day in the month of Ramadan. They explained the meaning of this great fast for a month as in accordance with the Quranic injunction and in solidarity with the poor and the hungry. A few Hindu friends tried to explain the meaning of their fast in similar terms. But another Hindu friend concluded the chat saying, *"Different people fast in different ways. We Hindus fast in a Hindu way"*.

**Israel Selvanayagam Co-Ordinator for the Programme on Inter-Faith Dialogue Tamilnadu Theological Seminary Madurai, South India.**

## **HISTORIC INTER-RELIGIOUS ENCOUNTER IN FIJI**

Hindu Temples in Fiji were desecrated by Christians in 1987. Seven years later representatives of 11 religious organisations gathered for a combined worship and reflection. The occasion was the 150th Anniversary of the Catholic Church in Fiji. As part of their celebrations they called on members of Interfaith Search Fiji to join them in an interfaith service and to offer a prayer, a hymn, a reading, or a meditation on the theme "Together on Pilgrimage". History was thus made in the celebrating of an historical event. Never before has Fiji experienced so rich an interfaith worship.

The service commenced with the Hindu lighting of the lamp and prayers. There were readings from the Sikh Holy Granth, the Koran, and the Baha'i Holy Book; reflections from the Anglican Church and the Shree Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha; bhajan and songs from the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, the Methodists, Presbyterians and Catholics, and the evening concluded with a liturgical dance to an Indian Christian song by a Catholic girl. The Catholic Archbishop and the Chairman of Interfaith Search Fiji gave short addresses. The venue, a large school hall, was filled to capacity - a far bigger crowd than was anticipated.

## **INTER-RELIGIOUS TEAM VISITS FIJI**

Two months before this event, an inter-religious team of three visited Fiji under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. Led by Dr Hans Ucko from the W.C.C., Dr Jeyapragasam of the Institute of Gandhian Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University and Professor Mumtaz Ali Khan of the Centre for Research and Development of Dalits, Bangalore, came to evaluate and help plan future directions and to promote dialogue.

Highlights of the visit included a public meeting held in the Anglican Cathedral at which the team members gave the addresses interspersed with brief scripture readings presented by representatives of the different faiths. The team met with the leadership of the Methodist Church in Fiji. This is the largest and most influential Christian body in the country. Interfaith Search has had minimal response from the Methodists and this meeting is seen as a breakthrough since the team was well received by the church leaders and everyone present pledged support for interfaith dialogue. The visiting team also participated in a cluster gathering at which the Baha'i organisation's paper on "The Family" was presented and discussed. Their week long visit was filled to capacity with meetings with various groups both in Suva and the Lautoka area, with a government minister, and even an interview with the local radio station.

Dr Hans Ucko's comprehensive report on the visit has provided valuable insights and recommendations, offering both encouragement and challenge for growth. The committee is already planning to implement and explore suggestions: that the Interfaith Search should develop a more public profile and an inter-religious approach to some of the issues which are dividing Fiji's society; that it should consider speaking out on behalf of the other in our racially as well as religiously divided community; and that it should strengthen links with the Methodists and some other non-participating religious organisations.

It was evident to members of Interfaith Search Fiji that the whole team's involvement in inter-religious affairs and their concern for bridge building between people of different religious traditions, is only one facet of their deep and wide concern for peace, reconciliation and justice. The question for us now is "How can we be effective in changing attitudes, breaking down barriers, dissolving stereotypes, and really working for reconciliation and harmony in Fiji?"

## **TIKOPIA...**

*Brother Moses SSF is from the island of Tikopia in the Solomon Islands, part of the Anglican Province of Melanesia. His Order is funding him to study at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, U.K., as a student of the Diploma in Mission Course and a participant in CEFACTS (The Centre for Anglican Communion Studies).*

I am very happy to have been asked by the Revd. Andrew Wingate, the Principal of the College of the Ascension (USPG) to produce a paper on the Anglican Church, and its relationship to Primal Religion in Tikopia. Tikopia today is a Christian Tikopia but our Tikopia! This means our four chiefs and their Royals (the Marus) have every power to control and look after human welfare on the island. The Church is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people but we do not expect the priest to be above the chief. Well, God is above everybody in the island, but the priest is expected to work side by side with the people.

Prior to the conversion of this small island by the Melanesian Brotherhood 60 years ago, the people of Tikopia were a religious community by nature. This means the people of Tikopia was a worshipping community very much aware of the spiritual world, and the presence of the gods and goddesses in and around them. We believe in many gods, and in fact each tribe has their own gods and goddesses. For example, I belong to the Niumano tribe of the Ariki Taumako chiefly line, and the name of my female goddess is Naumarama. As far as Tikopian belief is concerned, when I die I will proceed to the paradise or resting place headed by the Goddess Naumarama, that is if I live a good life in this world earth. The world earth or this life is seen by the people of Tikopia as a preparation for the next life which is life after death. Isn't that the Christian belief as well!

Christianity is the only faith in Tikopia today, and we are very pleased to be a Christian island, and to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ into our soul. Today our thinking about the destiny of man is determined by the Christian Gospel and our traditional belief. For example, the Christian faith holds the belief in salvation, punishment, life after death, the beyondness and the nearness of God. My traditional religion also holds a similar belief so I don't see any great difference or much contradiction between the Christian faith and Primal religion. I accept the fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the only true God, but our ways of worshipping God should be based on our understanding and local cultures. Theological language, liturgical language, images and symbols etc. should be based on Tikopian understanding and reasoning, that is if the Gospel of Christ is to be meaningful for my people.

The truth is that God was already at work in Tikopia before Christianity came to my island. In other words the missionaries brought the Bible but not God. To say the missionaries brought God to my people is a denial of the existence of God within creation and beyond time and space. The "beyond" attribute of God is a clear indication that God cannot be bound to a geographical area like Palestine or Europe. As far as I am concerned the primal religion in Tikopia was a preparation for the coming of the light who is Jesus Christ to lighten and renew and give meaning to our primal religion.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17) This means if Jesus were to be born in Tikopia he would say I have come to fulfill and give meaning to your primal religion.

## **INTER-FAITH ACTIVITY IN ARGENTINA**

### **The Overall Picture**

At the outset it would be well to make it clear that there is not very much inter-faith activity in Argentina organized at a national level. The major reason for this is the very conservative nature of the Argentine Roman Catholic episcopate. The attitude of the parochial clergy, however, is generally much more positive, and there are many cases of churches (Roman Catholic, Protestant and sometimes Orthodox) which enjoy good relationships with the Jewish community at a local level, particularly with synagogues linked to the Conservative movement.

Relations with the Muslim community are more problematic, although Muslim speakers appear on television, and teach in at least one course on comparative religions. The Islamic fundamentalist groups of course do not publicize their activities!

### **The Council of Christians and Jews**

Some 25 years ago the Council of Christians and Jews, which had been led by three individuals (a priest, a rabbi, and a Methodist minister) was reformed, under the direction of a committee. Those like myself who love committees will not be surprised to learn that little or nothing was done after this!

The C.C.J. is active again, however, supported by the Sisters of Zion and the Rabbinical Seminary. Last November a conference was held at the Rabbinical Seminary at which one of the speakers was the Rev. Dr. Jacobus Schoneveld, General Secretary of the International C.C.J.

### **CEDIN**

There is also an organization known as the CEDIN (Centre for Inter Religious Dialogue) which trains religious and community leaders in the techniques of dialogue.

### **The A.M.I.A. Tragedy**

The bomb attack on the A.M.I.A. building last July has produced an increased interest in Jewish-Christian relationships. It is sad that such a tragedy appears to be needed to awaken interest.

### **The Sisters of Zion**

Special mention must be made of the work of the Sisters of Zion. Sister Alda, a Brazilian nun has led their work in Argentina over the last 25 years or so, and has recently returned to Brazil. The work of her order included the removal of phrases such as "The Jews crucified Christ" from catechetical literature, teaching courses of various kinds, and the organization of local groups of Christians and Jews. Alda is a unique person, respected and loved by many people, who has accomplished a great deal, despite a lack of support from the leaders of her own church.

### **The I.S.E.R.**

For many years a group known as the "Superior Institute of Religious Studies" (I.S.E.R.) met monthly under the leadership of the late Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer. It used to be a group of some twelve to fifteen people: rabbis, pastors (including myself from various protestant churches, and Roman Catholic priests and lay people. The subjects considered varied considerably. Sometimes we discussed a theological theme of Jewish-Christian interest, while on other occasions (particularly during the 1976-1983 military regime) it was a question concerning human rights. The group organized a few inter-faith services (in this context, Jewish and Christian). The I.S.E.R. is now virtually limited to Conservative rabbis and professors of the I.S.E.D.E.T., the "Union Seminary".

To summarize: while more is being done in the area of Jewish-Christian dialogue than in the past, a great deal more could be done. There is still too much ignorance about Judaism on the part of Christians of all denominations, with a consequent distrust of the Jewish people and acceptance of stereotypes.

### **The Rev. P J Clarke, MA, B.D.**

*The Revd Peter Clarke has worked in Buenos Aires with the Church's Ministry among the Jews for thirty years. In the Southern Cone, there are large Jewish communities in Brazil as well as in Argentina, and smaller but very active communities in Uruguay, Chile and Peru.*

## **MYSTERIOUS ARE THE WAYS OF GOD: ANTHAPURUSHA'S TESTIMONY**

I was born in Bangalore, Karnataka to parents who had been Christians for generations. Yet I was also born and brought up in a multi-religious cultural milieu. The reason was that there were no Christian families or a church in the village where I grew up. I had all along studied in Government Schools. I was not exposed to church life until I went to the Hostel for further study. It was there that I was fully involved in the life of the church covering all aspects of church's activities. As a young man I had no intention of becoming a priest due to various inadequacies I thought I had in my life. What seemed an impossibility, God made possible, allowing me to take a bold and courageous step to work in His vineyard through the ups and downs of life.

Socialization to secular principles in my childhood broadened my vision of God being at work in all religions. It also helped me to value the truths and convictions of other religions. As providence had it, while pursuing a degree course I found myself in a centre known as "Ashirvad" (a Jesuit Centre for Inter-Faith Dialogue and Meetings) where monthly inter-faith dialogue meetings took place once a month, mainly with the members of other religions. This strengthened further my vision and conviction regarding the need for such an Inter-faith dialogue to share and communicate the Gospel with the people of other faiths and no faith. Within a year or two, I too had the opportunity to initiate such a meeting at Vivekanagar (one of the suburbs of Bangalore).

The people of India in general and the people of Karnataka in particular don't like even to move out of their districts. Their mobility of movement is restricted to their kith and kin. I too never thought that I would ever travel out of my district. It was a sudden and unplanned step which I took, without any compulsive reason, to move out first to New Delhi and then to Punjab in North India on a mere word by a friend. I was not good at learning a language yet went ahead, little realizing I had to preach in a language which I never intended to learn and live in a culture which was very different to mine. It was here that the Bishop of the Diocese of Chandigarh (Church of North India) selected and sponsored me for Theological Studies to the Bishop's College, Calcutta. As I was committed to grow in Inter-Faith Dialogue, in my B.D. Course I chose the following topic for my dissertation: "The Hindu Response to Dialogue Initiated by Christians". As part of my research I had to interview and have discussions with heads of different religions. This led to the establishment of the Inter-Faith Dialogue Centre at Bishop's College, Calcutta, which is still functioning.

Back in the Diocese the then Bishop appointed me his chaplain and gave me the responsibility of manager of the Ewing Christian High School. In addition to that I was made priest-in-charge of Narangwal and Lalton Kalan Church (rural churches) where I am pastor to this day. Once again, contrary to my expectations, I just happened to find myself in an administrative role which though unplanned and unintended I had to fit into. My sub-conscious mind was always reminding me to work out a method to get involved with the people of other faiths through inter-religious activities. The election of a new Bishop to the Diocese relieved me of the responsibilities as Chaplain and Manager. I thought that the appointed time had come to start a process of dialogue with Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab.

It so happened that a senior priest in a nearby town retired, so I was asked to look after that parish. It was here, unaware of what I was heading towards, that I came across a man who was from the slum situated in the centre of Ludhiana city. Later in the week I visited him in the slum. I was so horrified to see people living in sub-human conditions. There was no portable water, no sanitation facilities. The place was surrounded by dirty water and garbage. The people were ignorant, illiterate, oppressed and poor, living hand to mouth. Without a second thought I started off sharing the Gospel with the people. The response was instant and overwhelming. As used to be the case, instead of asking for material benefits, they were willing to accept Christ as their Saviour for the sake of faith itself. Within only six months 100 people were converted and baptised. Their number grew and spread to other localities. Within a year a church was built on the Government land where they had resided for more than 20 years.

The labour for building the church was their contribution. The old unused building materials came as donations from institutions and families and the Diocese helped get the material for the roof. The church was named after the slum; Shanti Nivas Church CNI and opened on Christmas Day, 1989 for public worship by the local Bishop.

Similarly, within two years of the first church another grew up in a very big slum. This church was also named after the name of the place; Christus Kirti Church CNI and opened for public worship on Easter Day 1991. Two distinctive features of this church were;

- it was literally built within five days on the Government land
- the cost of the roof was borne by a Sikh gentleman

Initially, there were 100 people who took baptism. Both the churches put together have around 125 families running to 750 people at present. 400 have offered themselves to Christ as their Master and Saviour and were baptised in batches. An illiterate man from their own community has become an Evangelist who ministers to his community. In fact, in my absence he is looking after these churches.

Isn't it marvellous and wonderful! The people are committed to witness Christ in their lives. We notice a radical change in their behaviour and outlook towards life. Though poor, one tenth of their income is earmarked from their meagre earnings as tithes. The good thing about these two churches is that they are open throughout the day and night. Having now provided sufficient Christian nurture, we have launched community development programmes for their physical upliftment, especially literacy, as being the main component for change and development.

It is entirely God's doing: I was hesitant to be a priest, and I became one. I never dreamed of going to North India, which I did suddenly. I never intended to learn Hindi language, now I preach and minister in that very language. I never thought that I would ever convert and baptise non-Christians, whereas I have converted and baptised more than 400 people within a period of 3 years and planted two churches in the slum areas of Ludhiana. I very much wanted to work with people of other faiths through the medium of Inter-Faith Dialogue Meetings, which I never did. Isn't it strange! Yet the words of St. Paul come alive with meaning. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." (Rom. 7:15)

To this very day I have not been able to fully understand why God made use of me in this way. Yet an inner voice prompts me to think that God has a plan and purpose for everyone and leads us to accomplish that plan. If not responded to positively He would take us the way He wants. When this happens no one can resist and change His actions because He is the author and pioneer of life.

Certainly what I have shared so far with you is undoubtedly about myself. But at the same time, it is simply successive events of God's intervention in my life. There is evidence when some of my close associates jokingly say, Wow am I a priest? Who made me one? This just indicates that I am basically a person who expresses and practises his faith in an unconventional and practical way in a world which is much ahead of us in the same direction. A cursory look at the lives of biblical characters like Jonah, Matthew, Peter and Paul subscribe to the view that they could not do what they wanted. Sadhu Sunder Singh (the saint of Punjab), a Sikh by birth, who at one stage burnt the Bible to show his contempt for Christianity, became one of His greatest disciples and suffered to bear witness to Christ. Here is a person who wanted to work through Inter-faith Dialogue Meetings, ending up with direct evangelism at grass-roots level. I can only marvel at God's way in the words of the psalmist and say "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. (Psalm 118:23).

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## **"AN INTER-FAITH DECLARATION"**

### **"A Code of Ethics on International Business for Christians, Muslims and Jews"**

The Revd David Horn of the Inner Cities Religious Council reflects on the significance of the Declaration, from the perspective of working with the ICRC.

David was a social worker and local government officer concerned with community development in Nottingham City and County, prior to ordination in 1982. As an Anglican priest he pastored a majority black congregation in a majority Asian and Muslim neighbourhood for ten years before being seconded as Secretary to the ICRC.

### **Introduction**

The ICRC comes under the umbrella of the U.K. Government's Cities and Countryside Group within the Department of the Environment. Council Members are drawn from the Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh faiths. These are faith communities with a strong presence in the English Inner Cities. The Council is chaired by a Government Minister. It seeks to be a place of dialogue between government and faith communities, a place of meeting where each party raises issues and policy concerns.

It also aims to be a catalyst for change, enabling government and faith communities to move with partnership to effect real change within deprived areas of urban England. It seeks to inform policy development, disseminate information and support practical initiatives.

It meets three times a year and runs a programme of regional conferences and seminars that enable faith communities to realise their full capacity to contribute to urban regeneration. It has a regular newsletter that publishes examples of creative faith community contributions in the area of economic and social regeneration.

## **The Declaration**

A Code of Ethics on International Business is an exciting model of dialogue between theologians and business leaders. It shows how task, context and practical concerns enable creative dialogue. It offers a model of meeting and reflection that is worthy of emulation. It describes a little of the struggle in the early stages and has produced a challenging outcome.

The Christian input comes from a white and Eurocentric perspective. This is valuable, but international Christian leaders will be aware it does not fully encompass the less individualised community-based faiths found in many vibrant Christian fellowships in the southern hemisphere and in the English Inner Cities, where faith is widespread and often growing.

The Declaration offers some valuable distinctions between ethics for economic systems, business organisations and individual practitioners. It is properly affirmative of the value of creative competition, but is weaker on the contribution of government and community in economic systems that employ socialist concepts and approaches in at least some areas of national life. It needs more work in the area of the kind of faith community input that is possible from within communities that are oppressed by the outfall of business praxis on the environment and on community well-being.

Those approaching the issues of "business and housing" and "business and health" may be able to take those environmental concerns further and this Declaration offers some good base thinking. It is an eminently understandable, accessible and usable document with a wide range of applications at a number of levels. It is a creative tool to build community within the context of business, especially where there is religious diversity in that workforce. It charges us to look at common values and build business activity based on values and there is every reason to believe this can be a highly profitable and competitive approach.