



Chapter 8 Interreligious Dialogue



Headline: Chapter 8: Interreligious Dialogue

Introduction



- ▶ **Headline: Chapter 8: Interreligious Dialogue**
- ▶ **Core Concept: Humans are social animals. While religion often acts as a "social glue" that unites people within the same faith, in a globalized world, it can sometimes be perceived as a barrier between "us" and "them."**
- ▶ **Objective: To understand the principles of peaceful coexistence amidst religious diversity through dialogue and mutual respect.**



8.1 Defining the Terms

- ▶ There are three closely related terms used to describe the promotion of mutual understanding:
- ▶ 1. Interreligious Dialogue
- ▶ 2. Interfaith Fellowship
- ▶ 3. Religious Dialogue



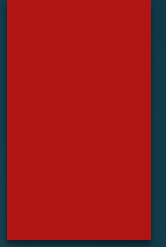
8.2 Historical Background



- ▶ Origin: Translated from "Interreligious Dialogue" or "Interfaith Dialogue."
- ▶ Key Milestones: Formally initiated by the Catholic Church, notably by Pope John Paul II.
- ▶ Traced back to the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh.
- ▶ Dialogue vs. Comparative Religion:
- ▶ Comparative Religion: An objective/scientific study of data.
- ▶ Interreligious Dialogue: A subjective/experiential study focusing on faith, feelings, and the "heart" of the believer.



10 Characteristics of Interreligious Dialogue



- ▶ 1. Not a debate or a contest to win.
- ▶ 2. Not an attempt to prove others wrong.
- ▶ 3. Must be free from authoritarianism (thinking one's self is always superior).
- ▶ 4. Avoids fundamentalism or "far-right" exclusivity.
- ▶ 5. No goal of converting the other party.
- ▶ 6. Not just a casual chat or data exchange.
- ▶ 7. Not a one-time event; it is a process.
- ▶ 8. Not a "syncretism" (mixing religions into one).
- ▶ 9. Not claiming all religions are identical.
- ▶ 10. Respects the right of others to share their faith.



8.3 Religious Conflicts in History



- ▶ History shows that religion has often been misused as a cause for violence:
- ▶ The Crusades (1095–1291): Conflict between Christianity and Islam over the Holy Land.
- ▶ Hindu-Muslim Conflict: Leading to the partition of India and Pakistan and the birth of Sikhism.
- ▶ Intra-faith Conflicts: Divisions between Catholic/Protestant or Sunni/Shia.
- ▶ Modern Examples: Conflicts in Myanmar, Indonesia, and the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan.
- ▶ Insight: These conflicts often stem from a lack of tolerance and the politicization of faith.



8.4 The Necessity of Interreligious Dialogue



- ▶ Why is it vital today?
- ▶ 1. Diversity: Societies are more religiously mixed than ever.
- ▶ 2. Scientific Pressure: Religion is often viewed as "superstitious"; religions must unite to show their moral value.
- ▶ 3. Globalization: Technology makes the world a "Global Village," increasing interaction.
- ▶ 4. Migration: People move for economic reasons, bringing their faith to new communities.
- ▶ 5. Conflict Resolution: Dialogue is the best tool to de-escalate violence rooted in religious identity.



8.5 Religious Pluralism



- ▶ **Concept:** The idea that multiple religions can coexist peacefully and interact positively.
- ▶ **John Hick's Theory:** * All religions claim a "Ultimate Reality" but describe it differently (Theistic vs. Non-theistic).
- ▶ **The Test of Truth:** A religion is credible if it successfully transforms a person from being "Self-Centered" to being "Reality-Centered" (focusing on Truth/Goodness).
- ▶ **Summary:** We should not judge which religion is "more true," but look at how each helps its followers become better human beings.



8.6 Methods for Building Good Relations (Part 1)



- ▶ 1. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's Three Resolves:
 - ▶ Understand the heart of one's own religion.
 - ▶ Create mutual understanding between all religions.
 - ▶ Pull the world out of the grip of materialism.
- ▶ 2. Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto) - Three Universal Principles:
 - ▶ Universal Truth: Good deeds lead to good results for everyone, regardless of faith.
 - ▶ Universal Humanity: Killing is a sin against any human, not just those of your own group.
 - ▶ Universal Loving-Kindness (Metta): Love for all beings without boundaries.



8.6 Methods for Building Good Relations (Part 2)



- ▶ Individual Liberty (Preecha Changkhwanyuen & Somphan Phromtha): Respect that faith is a personal choice; avoid criticizing the "unprovable" aspects of others' beliefs.
- ▶ Peace and Justice (Abdul Hamid Bin Idris): Islam teaches that difference in religion is not a reason for hostility, but for "getting to know one another."
- ▶ Equality (Bishop Chuusak Sirisut): Treat others as equals; no one is "higher" or has more rights.
- ▶ Self-Reflection (Pattaraporn Sirikanchana): Constantly review your own teachings and reduce selfishness to be more open-minded.



8.7 Interreligious Activities in Schools



- ▶ The "Moral Center" Project: Developed a manual for schools to foster religious harmony among youth.
- ▶ Key Sensitivities for Organizers:
- ▶ Touch: In Islam, unrelated men and women should not touch; activities should pair same-sex participants.
- ▶ Candles: Use with caution, as they hold specific ritual meanings for Buddhists and Christians.
- ▶ Scriptures: Must be treated with utmost respect according to each tradition's customs.



Examples of Harmony Activities



- ▶ **Religious Symbols:** Learning the meaning of the Cross, the Dhamma Wheel, the Crescent, etc.
- ▶ **Way of Life/Way of Dhamma:** Comparing daily practices that lead to happiness.
- ▶ **Sacred Places:** Understanding the "heart" of a Temple, Church, or Mosque to ensure proper etiquette when visiting.
- ▶ **Scripture Summaries:** Learning the core essence of the Tripitaka, Bible, and Quran.

การศึกษาทำความเข้าใจในแต่ละศาสนา โดยมี ศาสนา พุทธ คริสต์ อิสลาม ทำ
ให้ผู้เข้าร่วมมีความเข้าใจในหลักคำสอนของศาสนาแต่ละศาสนามากยิ่งขึ้น

ศาสนาพุทธ



ศาสนาอิสลาม



Conclusion

- ▶ No religion teaches its followers to view others as enemies.
- ▶ Interreligious dialogue is not about changing what you believe, but about loving your neighbor and respecting their path.
- ▶ Final Thought: Good deeds are the bridge. Peace in society begins with the understanding that while our rituals differ, our goal of "Goodness" is the same.



