

Conversation with Archbishop John Bathersby

Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane
Given by Venerable Master Chin Kung
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Religious education is very important for everyone. If we view the global situations for the past 50 years, many countries have been disrupted by increasing conflicts and disasters. It has become worse each time. People are afraid of these critical situations and have been trying to find a solution. Yet, to save our world from grave disasters, there is no better solution than religious education, for it is the teachings of God and Sacred Saints to save our world.

If we, human beings, cannot abide by the teachings of Sages, yet attach to our own viewpoints and opinions, we will create grave mistakes. Nowadays, education focuses only on sciences, technologies, and financial benefits but not on morality, ethics or love. This disregard has resulted in grave disturbance and catastrophe to our societies. If science and technology are not guided by the teachings of God and the Holy Sages, then these advancements will only become harmful to living beings and eventually destroy the whole world. Therefore, people start to search for solutions to save the world, to change bad influence of our societies and to purify people's mind and heart. They think of many ways possible, but it never occurs to them that religious education is the solution.

The conflicts in the Middle East were brought on by the people's neglect of Islamic teachings and exploitation by those with selfish purposes. The sacred book of Koran mentions the holy war. Holy war refers to one's shield, an act of self-defense. Holy war is not an act of invasion. It is absolutely not to attack others by using violence. China's 8-year Resistant War to the Japanese invasion is a form of holy war and not an invasion of others.

The name Islam means peace and harmony. How can Muslims attack others with military force or violence? If everyone understands the true meanings of the teachings in one's religion, people can work and live together in harmony.

With my long years of understanding in Buddhism and other religions, I believe there is only one true God, who possesses perfect wisdom, perfect ability and perfect appearances. This Holy Being will take on various identities with unlimited means to help people of

different regions, cultures and races. His forms and ways of education may be different but they all lead to one goal.

From this, we are able to comprehend that all living beings throughout the whole universe, not just one region, are children of God. God wishes that every living being in the universe can embrace and uphold the teachings of Holy Sages. We should never follow our own views, as they always lead to mistakes. The difference between sages and us is that their concerns are always for the benefits of others. For humans, we only care for our own.

For every religious leader, teacher and missionary, we must learn from God to broaden our mind and heart. We should be concerned only with the welfare of others and discard our own. If our intentions are selfish, then we will always be ordinary beings. On the other hand, if our intentions are to benefit others, we are true followers, students, and messengers of God.

We must harbour the sincere, pure and nondiscriminatory loving kindness to help all beings regardless of race, religion and nationality. In the lecture of Chairman Mao of China, he mentioned, "we should serve people wholeheartedly and spare no effort." These are the words from God. "For the well beings of all people, we should serve everyone wholeheartedly and spare no effort." Today, we need to implement God's words sincerely.

I am very much indebted to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Honorary Philip Ruddock who wished that I would remain in Australia. He hopes I could contribute more assistance and endeavors in the works of Multiculturalism. I am very grateful to his invitation, thus I am now here in Australia.

Australia provides a very good environment for multicultural development. It is the first country to pioneer a multicultural department by the government. The Singapore government has yet to organize such a department. The universities play the leading role in organizing multicultural activities in Australia, and this is a very wonderful occasion. With my four years in Singapore I took the initiative to visit various local religions and to assist in their charity works and educational projects. Although we were very successful and were applauded by the Singapore government, the government had yet wished to set up an organization to enforce the peace of multi-racial and multi-religion. Thus, there were many hardships behind our success.

After coming to Australia, I attended the Multi Faith Forum and I met with Mr. Uri Themal OAM, Executive Director of Multicultural Affairs Queensland. This forum is

organized by Griffith University. Here in Australia, government and universities take the lead in multicultural harmony. And this is what we cannot see in Singapore. I imagine that multiculturalism will take flight in Australia and I believe Australians are very fortunate, pure and kind people. God will take special care of this land and her inhabitants.

While in Australia, I have had a chance to meet with government authorities, religious leaders, professors and chancellors of universities. All of them are enlightened beings, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Messengers of God and are indeed very rare and precious. I am very honoured to be here in Australia to have the opportunity to join in this wonderful work to save the world. I have spoken with the professors and lecturers of the Peace and Conflict Resolution Institute in the University of Queensland that this work is very urgent, and has to be carried out without delay because there are many disasters imminent and that we are all worried about a Third World War, a Nuclear Warfare.

The most important principle of religious education, the teachings of God and Holy Sages is to harbour a Sincere, Pure and Non-discriminatory Love. If we could spread this Love to all beings throughout the whole universe, this shall be the brightest light of the universe, and the light of God. In Buddhism, it is the wisdom of our True Nature and the light of compassion. We hope that this light could shine on the whole universe and bring guidance to resolve the sufferings of all beings.

The love of God and Holy Beings is sincere, pure and unconditional. Every religious leader, clergyman and clergywoman is a representative of God, and must spread and foster God's love. Religious education shall be propagated not only to people in one city, or one region, but also to people in the whole world and universe.

I wish that in the future local universities would have a specialized channel on satellite TV station to broadcast every religious teaching. This channel can transmit the gospel of God, teachings of the Sages without interruption on a twenty-four hour basis. For this channel, we could organize a multi-faith teachings committee to carry out the plans. This committee will invite religious leaders from each religion to teach. Once we have these facilities, each religion could provide an hour program daily. And these programs will continue for twenty-four hours every day and throughout the year to let everyone constantly immerse under the teachings of God and the Sages. Even though there are many program-channels today, I believe that people have a conscience, they will compare among the different channels. They will make a wise choice. Once the number of people watching this channel increases, their hearts will change towards goodness and then social morality will improve. This is why we must work on the project of a satellite TV station and Internet.

Moreover, we need to continue to keep in touch, have exchange- and dialogue-sessions with prominent statesmen or stateswomen and religious leaders as well as eminent professors and scholars in academic circles who are Messengers of God and have a great impact on society. All should work together to save the world.

Talking about communication and exchange-visit, in the year 2000, I have helped to assist a delegation consisting of leaders of nine religions in Singapore, two representatives from each religion, went on a two-week visit to China's religious organisations. This trip was very successful. It is a new beginning. I hope, through this experience, we could organize a delegation with Australian religious leaders as the host delegates to visit countries in Asia, North and South America and Europe. At least, we will organise one or two trips a year. There is a Chinese saying that if people meet, closer ties will develop between them. It is necessary for all religions to foster closer ties, with a common goal, to pray for world peace. Hopefully, global religious followers will interact with each other in mutual respect and loving kindness, non-discrimination, harmony and peace, and work together with one-mind to save this world from nuclear warfare.

There are many kind-hearted people in our world, wanting to do something good, but they do not know how. This good deed is the best one and the most important thing to do in the world; we must put in our best efforts to carry out this task. There will be many people who are willing to support this project as well as many more Holy Beings.

During the past five years, I have been very pessimistic and disappointed with the prospect of our world. After coming to Australia and seeing religious leaders, scholars in academic circles and people in the government give me a ray of hope that there is hope for this world -- the saviours are in Australia. I hope Your Most Reverend will take the lead and we shall do our best to follow in this work. I appreciate the hospitality of Your Most Reverend. May God bless you! Thank you.

Recorded by Wu Ping

Translated by Wu Ping, Wu Hsing, and Wu Chin

Students of Pure Land Learning College Association