

*Celebrating the Differences!*

Presented at the First Global Multi-Faith Conference of Tertiary Chaplains,  
Vancouver, Canada. June 22-28, 2000

***Exploring the contradiction of violence and reconciliation within one's own religious tradition, (particularly the Christian tradition) and exploring initiatives for alternatives on the university campus.***

The close of the second millenium has been marked by violence in various parts of the world, much of it fuelled by religious difference. At the same time there are signs of hope for reconciliation and peace.

This contradiction of violence and reconciliation, exclusion and inclusion, is also found within the Christian church.

The workshop will encourage participants to share their stories of violence and reconciliation, exclusion and inclusion, within their faith communities in the context of their practice as tertiary chaplains.

(Participants from all faith traditions are also encouraged to participate, though the presenter is conscious of the need to explore these issues at least from within his Christian world. It is hoped that the principles that evolve from the workshop may also provide insights in multi-faith situations.)

In working toward the development of a theology that may account for these contradictions, models will be developed, and insights gathered, that draw on the stories that are shared. A starting point will be the 'set' models proposed by P. Hiebert (Fuller Theological Seminary). It is hoped that such models may help participants clarify their own situations, empowering them to see alternatives.

A theological method that recovers and re-evaluates subdominant, hidden or lost traditions within the Judeo-Christian Scriptures will be discussed as a means of proposing alternative theologies.

This method will be illustrated by the 'Earth Bible' project. (N. Habel, Flinders University)

An inclusive Christology will be presented for discussion by Mike Pietsch, Chaplain at Adelaide University.

The university is a multi-cultural and multi-faith community that may provide a context for experiment with respect to religious tolerance or even harmony.

The workshop will encourage participants to share their hopes for initiatives that may promote greater understanding and friendship between individuals and groups of different persuasions on their university campus.

Ongoing supportive relationships among participants beyond the conference will be encouraged.

Time required - 2 hours (max 30 participants)

Anticipated equipment needs - circle of chairs on one level, whiteboard (or equivalent).

Brief biography of the presenter - current title and role, institution, brief educational background and work history:

Geoff Boyce is the Uniting Church Chaplain to Flinders University, South Australia.

He trained as a secondary school Science teacher (B.Sc, Diploma of Teaching) and during the 70's retrained in Social Education (Grad. Dip SocEd).

From 1982 - 1987 he liaised with education authorities and the Christian churches in South Australia to forge a new interface between state schools and the Christian churches. This has resulted in significant collaboration in practically every state secondary school in South Australia.

In 1992 he left teaching to take up the position of State Director of Scripture Union and commenced theological studies at Flinders University.

He left Scripture Union in 1995 and commenced as Chaplain to Flinders University in 1997.

During the last 3 years Geoff has been working on re-imagining the role of tertiary Christian chaplaincy in the light of changing circumstances. He is interested in postmodern thought and the redefinition of Christian community and its worship life in changing times.