

MINUTES



MEETING OF KNOX INTER-FAITH NETWORK

Held Monday 8 August 2005 at Knox Civic Centre

PRESENT:

Representatives of Faith Communities Present:

Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna
 St Simons Rowville, Catholic Church
 Temple Society, Belgrave
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
 Uniting Church, Ferntree Gully
 Our Lady of Lourdes Boronia, Catholic Church
 Sikh Faith
 Islamic Society of Melbourne, Easter Region (ISOMER)
 St John the Baptist, Ferntree Gully Catholic Church

Guests and Visitors:

Chan Academy, (Buddhist Discussion Centre, Upwey)

APOLOGIES:

Ferntree Gully Catholic Church
 Rowville Uniting Church
 Boronia Uniting Church

OPENING:

Meeting was opened at 7:38pm by Rowland who welcomed everyone.
 Julian delivered a chant from the Buddhist tradition to open the meeting.

AGENDA:

The agenda was accepted as proposed.

4. Presentation by Buddhist Community

(Summary as prepared by the Secretary – respectful apologies for any omissions or errors.)

Julian noted the apology from Anita Hughes, Abbot of his community.

Buddha Dhamma is a system of living taught by the Buddha Shakyamuni, who was born about 2,500 years ago in Lumbini in ancient India and known as Siddhartha. While searching for truth about human sickness and suffering, Siddhartha came to the realisation of the middle way of life – it must be neither strict nor undisciplined. So Buddha Dhamma is known as The Middle Way.

The system can help one come out of suffering – when practiced and realised, the practitioner can become fully enlightened, so stopping the cycle of birth and avoiding old age,

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sickness and death. The Buddha came to his own enlightenment and taught that each person can find out from themselves all the things that he had found out, using the method he taught. He found that the cycle of birth is fuelled by craving – the desire for being.

He taught the law of dependent arising, as a structural principle, is to be understood in the four noble truths, the summary of the teaching of the Buddha. These are:

- The noble truth of sorrow: dukkha (suffering or sorrow) – that which is difficult to be endured. There are three insights associated with this: see that there is suffering, seek to understand suffering, and reach an understanding of suffering. The causes of human suffering can be found in the thirsts of the physical body and in the illusions of worldly passion.
- The noble truth of the arising is sorrow. This has three aspects: there is the origin of suffering – the attachment to desire, desire should be let go of, and desire has been let go of. There are three kinds of desire: desire for sense pleasure, desire to become and desire to get rid of.
- The noble truth of the cessation is sorrow: if desire can be removed, then passion will die out and all human suffering will be ended.
- The noble truth of the path which leads to the cessation of sorrow. This is the eightfold path: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. To start to live by this path one ought to develop the ten bases for meritorious actions: giving, morality, meditation to arise the skilful states of the mind conducive to liberation, reverence to the triple gem (one's parents, teachers, elders), sharing of merits, sharing in others' merits, listening to Dhamma, teaching the Dhamma, rectification of one's views.

Discussion:

- Buddhists do not seek to proselytise – as this would be considered against the principle of cause and effect in directing people to behave certain ways.
- The Buddha taught 40 different forms of meditation (or concentration) – the variety offers a different way of meditating for different situations and for different people. It is intended to help focus the mind and allow clarity of thought in considering a person's current situation.
- The two clasped hands in greeting can be interpreted as one hand in wisdom and one hand in heart.

5. Previous Minutes and Business Arising

RESOLUTION: The minutes as presented were moved for acceptance by Connie, seconded by Daphne and confirmed unanimously.

1. Actions Arising
None other than as represented on the agenda.
2. Event Reports

IIFWP Building a Culture of Peace: Julian attended and noted that about 70-80 were present. Another session is planned for the future.

JCMA Residential Interfaith Conference: Riad attended and reported on this event. The theme of the event was "Creation in Crisis" – covering natural and man-made crises, and how faiths react to and deal with them. The event was based on discussion groups, with each group being made up of two Jews, two Christians and two Muslims. The discussions were constructive and open.

(Riad noted that the event finished on the day of the London bombings, and he along with many people were very distressed by the event. However, support from the many people at the conference was very important. Riad, with people of many faiths, including Muslims, have since protested against the bombings.)

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Visit to Knox Presbyterian Church: Daphne reported on the visit, noting attendance by several people from the Network, and the visitors found it very informative. Thanks to Rowland for organising and hosting the evening.

3. Web-site Implementation
The money has been received from Knox City Council of \$1000 plus \$100 to cover the GST. Vivek Sharma has been engaged, and an initial payment of \$160 to allow Vivek to engage the hosting organisation and to register the domain name.
4. Treasurer's Report
RESOLUTION: Moved by Rolf and seconded by Riad that the banking signatories be changed to add Peter (Secretary) and Rolf (Treasurer) to the banking accounts, and that the mailing address be changed from the previous Treasurer's (Rowland) to an address provided by the new Treasurer, Rolf.

6. Future Items of Interest

1. Justice & Reconciliation in the Middle East: Is there a meeting point for Judaism and Islam? A lecture by Dr Solomon Schimmel at the B'nai B'rit House, 99 Hotham St, East St Kilda, at 8pm on Wednesday, 17 August. Cost \$10. Bookings 9572 5770.

7. Comments on Constitution and Meeting Procedures

- 1) Should the agenda contain a standing item to 'discuss matters of common concern', as contained in the Constitution?
RESOLUTION: Moved by Daphne and seconded by Peter that the agenda allow for the possibility of "matters of common concern" to be discussed, subject to the matter being advised at least one week in advance of the meeting, and sufficient time being available during the meeting to discuss it. Carried unanimously.
RESOLUTION: Moved by Peter and seconded by Aly that the Executive seek to draft a Knox Inter-faith Network press release in response to current world events for release by the Network, subject to agreement by the membership. Riad to initiate. Executive to trigger email vote. Carried unanimously.
- 2) The number of religious communities represented in the Network was discussed. There are about 100 religious or faith communities within the Knox City Council boundary, with 60 being listed in the Council directory. Membership has generally been in the range of about 10-12 communities. Peter spoke to the previous attempts to attract membership by mailing directly from Council to the communities, which had limited success. The web-site funded by Knox Council is aimed to help increase this membership to about 20 communities. The aim will be to launch the web-site formally, attract some local press coverage including photos and possibly Councillor attendance, and then promote the Network.

8. Meeting dates and Functions for 2005

3 October 2005 (Room 1): "Understanding of God" – Presenters: Rowland, Aly, Harpal, Daphne, Rolf – 5-7 minutes of each.

5 December 2005 (Room 1): Annual General Meeting + TBD

10 September, 6-7:30pm City Life Church, SE Corner Cathies Lane and High Street Road, Wantirna South – meeting at the Cafe

End of Year Tsunami memorial – Sikh Gurdwara TBD

Meeting ended at 9:30pm.

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