



Christian / Buddhist DIALOGUE



As the West is becoming increasingly more diverse, it is harder to define it as being dominated by any one religious tradition. For most of our 2500 year history, the teaching and practice of the Buddhas has occurred in environments of some other faith. Hindu in India, Confucian in China, Shinto in Japan, Bon in Tibet. We have always been the minority voice. Modern Buddhism is no exception, where, for the most part, we are speaking to Christians in an historically Christian society.'

At present, we are typically representative of less than 10% of most national populations. The task of making ourselves understood in our communities necessitates we likewise understand the faiths of our communities. Just as Buddhist teaching has grown and changed as it became expressed in Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan and so on, we need to share a common religious language with our communities. This is what has occasioned this series of Dharma Talks at Red Maple.

Rather than simply discuss interfaith dialogue, we must also engage in it. For this reason we have formed a partnership through our good friend, Rev. Meg King, the United Church of Canada minister in Pugwash, Nova Scotia. She and I, and our respective faith communities will consider this topic over the next 10 months and exchange our views with each other. This is a wonderful and brave endeavour for all of us.

Each month we will focus on one of a series of topics. Each of Meg and I will comment on the theme and share it with our communities. We will then comment back to each other. During my monthly Dharma talk, usually on the 3rd Saturday of the month, I will pull together where the dialogue is at. We will post details online and encourage on-going dialogue between friends in our respective communities.

The topics will include:

- Why dialogue? (Feb);
- Personal Theology and Process Theology (March);
- The Question of Suffering (April);
- Jesus and Shakyamuni as Mediators and Saviours (May);
- God and Nature (June);
- Works and Faith (July) and
- Life, Death, Afterlife (Sep).

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