

Religious Diversity in
Your Community:
discovering
understanding
collaborating

Josef Walker
Chaplain

**Center for Religious
Experience and Study**



God's Word

*Blessed be my people Egypt,
and the work of my hands Assyria,
and my inheritance, Israel.*

Isaiah 19.25

Terms

- “Faith”
- Religion (communal, organized, historic)
- Spiritual path (personal, eclectic, synthesis)
- Philosophy (humanism)
- Civil Religion (examples)

Can? Should Christians Engage in Inter-religious Dialogue?

Christians have always existed
in multi-religious cultures -
See the New Testament Church

Approaches

- Exclusive – my religion is THE right religion (human nature)
- Inclusive – my religion is right but all others are “included” under mine
- Syncretism - all spiritual paths are about (or are) the same; blending
- Pluralist – creative tension (my description)

(primarily monotheistic categories)

A positive approach

- From a Christian perspective – one God
- The Holy Spirit animates all people
- All people are children of God
- “Human dignity” as baseline
- Scripture support (for either position)
- One aspect of Mission (priorities, weave into existing)



Named best small weekly in Illinois — five times

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Heights Garden Walk planned

The Palos Heights Women's Club is organizing a Summer Solstice Garden Walk to be held Saturday, June 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Several garden tours will be featured, including this flower-filled front yard. An artist leads to the yard, with paintings, fountain and new water park.

Cook sales tax hike will take effect July 1

For the first time in 19 years, Cook County will raise the portion of the sales tax to a full percentage. Increasing revenues will have to pay for new infrastructure, such as the \$1.6-billion airport. The new sales tax will go into effect starting July 1. The Cook County Board was unable to raise enough money needed to help balance the county's budget from various fees, so it earlier this year to take the sales tax, which is expected to bring in more than an additional \$400 million to counties a year.

The sales tax hike will mean that double the county's portion of sales tax, from 1/2 percent to 1 percent. In the case of Palos Heights, the city of Palos Heights will see an increase in the portion of the full 1 percent that it receives from the city as its share of the sales tax.

Palos Park's new sales tax rate will be 1/2 percent, with 1/2 percent going to the village. In the case of Palos Park, the new sales tax rate will be 1/2 percent, with 1/2 percent going to the village. In the case of Palos Park, the new sales tax rate will be 1/2 percent, with 1/2 percent going to the village.

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Out-of-district students cause alarm in Dist. 135

By Meg Sullivan staff reporter. A rising number of families living outside Orland Park are sending their children to District 135 schools, and taxpayers are footing the bill. Board members agreed to more parents to writing to follow residents' lower ratings. Board members agreed to more parents to writing to follow residents' lower ratings.

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Still plenty of summer left at Heights pool

Children enjoy the fun of the Dip Dap in the cool blue of Palos Heights Pool during its season on May 21. A new slide also greets visitors of the pool this season. It addition of fun activities is also planned. See story on Page 5.

Palos invited to Concert in the Park

By Susan Lang Palos Park Arts. The Beverly Brothers will perform at the Palos Park Arts Center on Thursday, June 12, at 7 p.m. The group will perform at the Palos Park Arts Center on Thursday, June 12, at 7 p.m.



The Beverly Brothers will play hits of the '60s and '80s at Concert in the Park next Thursday at the Palos Park Village Green.

Target Communities

- People who are singled out for discrimination or demonizing based on color, culture, religion, gender, sexual identity, or other characteristics
- Withdraw, create sub-cultures for safety and to maintain identity
- African-Americans
- Latino/Latinas
- Pacific, Oriental origins
- Irish and Italian Catholic Immigrants

Step One: Faith Sharing

Always be ready to give an explanation
to anyone who asks you
for a reason for your hope,
but do it with gentleness and reverence...

1 Peter 3.15b-16

Faith Sharing

- Comfortable with their own faith
- Bible study, church classes are already skill-building
- Life-long spiritual growth



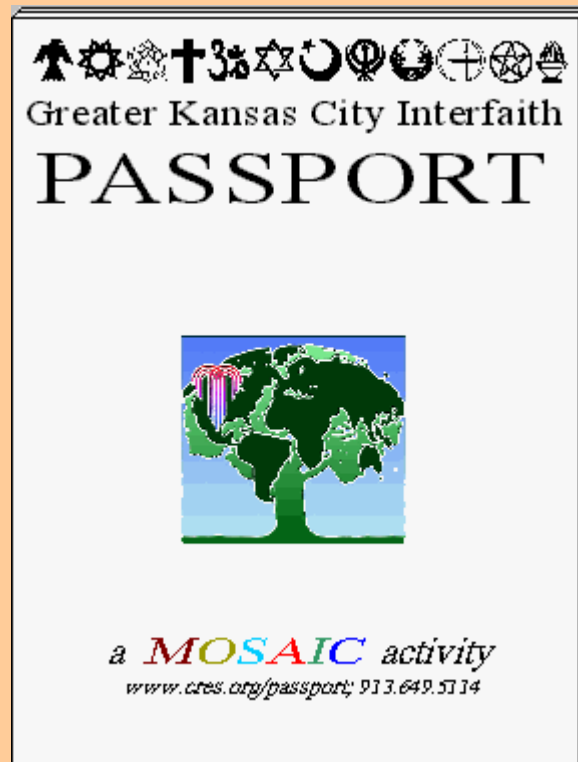
The more I am able to affirm others, to say "yes" to them in myself, by discovering them in myself and myself in them, the more real I am. I am fully real if my own heart says yes to everyone. I will be a better Catholic, not if I can refute every shade of Protestantism, but if I can affirm the truth in it and still go further. So, too, with the Muslims, the Hindus, the Buddhists, etc.

Thomas Merton in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

This does not mean syncretism, indifferentism, the vapid and careless friendliness that accepts everything by thinking of nothing. There is much that one cannot "affirm" and "accept," but first one must say "yes" where one really can. If I affirm myself as a Catholic merely by denying all this is Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, Hindu, Buddhist, etc., in the end I will find that there is not much left for me to affirm as a Catholic: and certainly no breath of the Spirit with which to affirm it.

Thomas Merton in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

Step Two: Preparation



Step Two: Preparation



Reactions

- Threatened; retreat to fundamentalism*
- Get confused and give up
- Journey deeper into their own tradition and other spiritualities

Do people leave Christianity?

- Permission to question is permission to grow
- Often what people are looking for is in their “home” tradition and they will discover it through interfaith dialogue
- Renewed love of their own tradition

Practical Issues II

- Ethnic and cultural differences
- Liberal and conservative
- Different organizational structures
- Level of formation (seminaries)
- Big 3 v. All religions

Ways to proceed

- Book Clubs (limited time, resource guides)
- Study Groups (topics, human trafficking)
- Panels
- Site Visits
- Charity, Social Justice, Advocacy
- Meals - natural symbol of hospitality but “what is this?” and who pays?
- Covenant relationship (longer term)
- Existing resources (Christian Century, Alban)

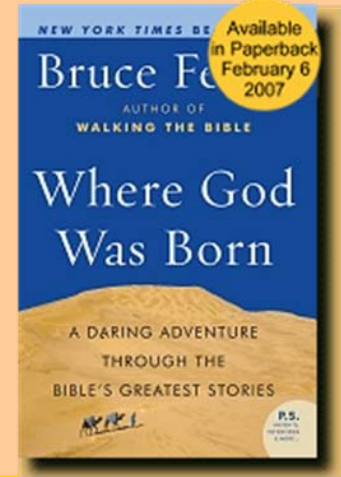
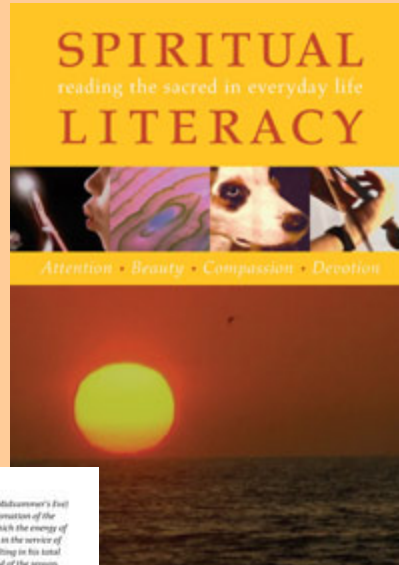
Simple Conversations

As a person of a different group than yours, here are a few things I want you to know about me.

- My pride in my religion/culture/country/group etc.
- My pain in my religion/culture/country/group etc.
- What I never want to hear said about my religion/culture/country/group etc. again.
- How you can be an even better ally.
- Topics I would like to discuss in the coming months.

David Nelson

Tools and Props - increase comfort level



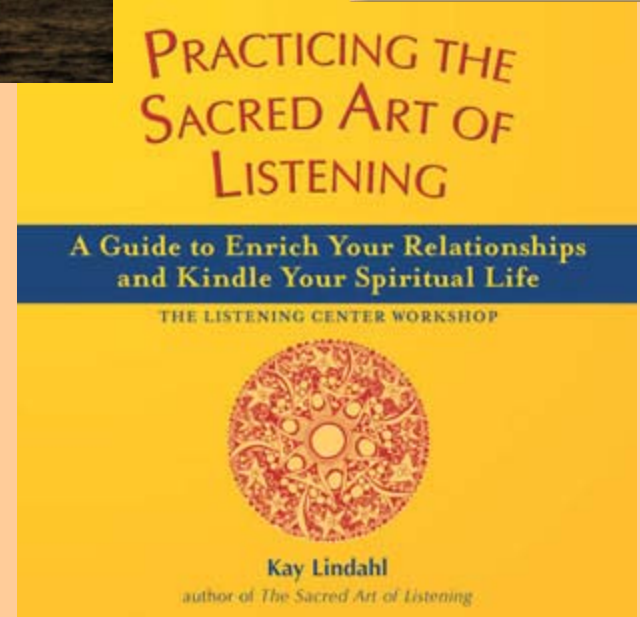
JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

WICCA
20 Litha (also called Midsummer's Eve) celebrates the consummation of the sacred marriage in which the energy of the God is poured out in the service of life. His sacrifice, resulting in his total immolation by the end of the season, sets the standard of self-giving in service to the Goddess. Litha comes on the June solstice.

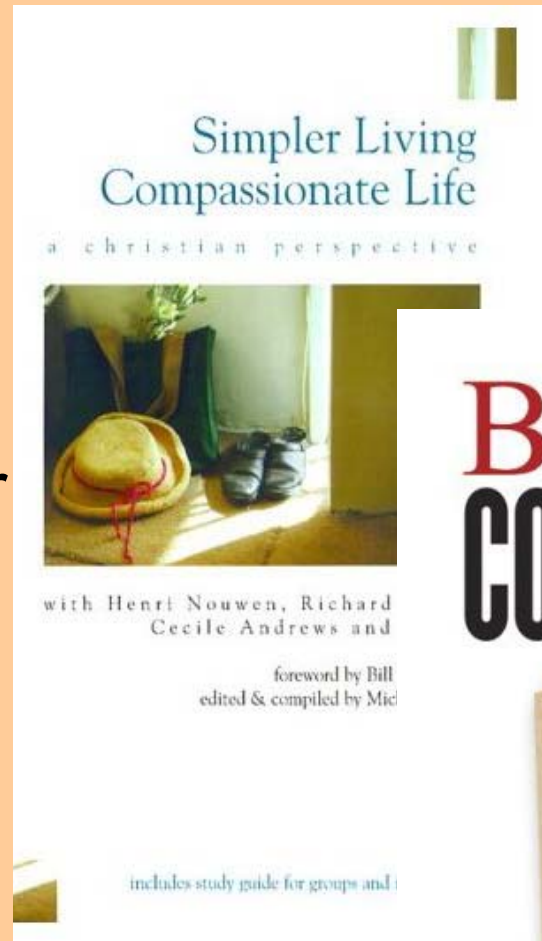
ZADOKSFRANTZ
23 July 3: Chazhar Mandysheim celebrates the creation of water, the sowing of the summer crop and the harvesting of grain.

www.muslimfaithcalendar.com



Simple Living

- All religions teach intentional simplicity in one form or another
- Economy makes this attractive
- Practical and Spiritual



Preparing the Speakers

Ministers open their ears to representatives of city's many faiths

By HANNAH MYRICK
The Examiner

Zarrieff Osman was raised Baptist, married a Methodist, and converted to Islam. Osman knows about religious diversity, but he and others of minority faiths fear that the general public may not be very well informed about many of the religions practiced by their neighbors.

"You are living around Muslims every day, you just don't know it," said Osman, who was a guest at the Thursday meeting of the Independence Ministerial Alliance at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church.

KARLA WAITE
luncheon attendee

"I was amazed at how many faiths there are in our area. I didn't realize there was such a variety."

Osman was one of six panelists invited to speak about different religious faiths practiced by those living in the Independence area.

"Today's focus is on neigh-
See LUNCH / 3A

Most people are not public speakers or educators



Clear communication of goal, format

- You have 5 minutes for your introduction in which I hope you will address:
- Your name
- Your religion
- Your occupation
- Where you live (neighborhood or part of town)
- Where you practice your religion (in what part of KC is your synagogue, mosque, etc. located)
- (Briefly) How you practice your religion (daily prayer, dietary observances, clothing)
- We are not addressing the history of particular religions but rather how you and others practice the religion here and now.
- Be prepared to respond to this question: “What is one thing you want Christian ministers to know?” Maybe you want to stress commonalities (i.e.: charity) or differences in religions. Or you may want to say how you feel being part of a minority religion (are you discriminated against?).

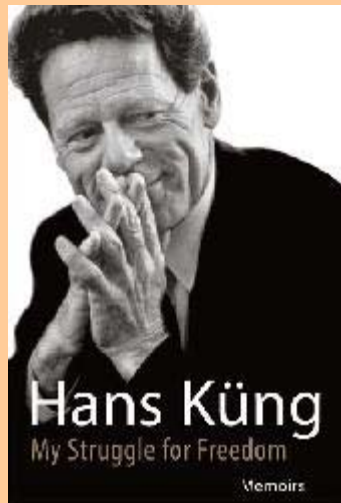
Issues, Projects



The Faith Quilts Project is bringing together people of faith to visually express their deeply held beliefs through collaborative quilting.



Hans Kung



- No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.
- No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.
- No dialogue between the religions without common ethical standards.
- No survival of our planet in peace and justice without a global ethic.