

Australia is a country where people of many cultural and faith backgrounds live together. As Christians we believe that diversity is a part of God's creation. We are called to live together in peace, loving our neighbour as God loves us and all people.

Responding to Christ's call within Australia's multicultural, multireligious landscape, the Uniting Church in Australia National Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths was established to promote knowledge and understanding of other living world faiths and their communities. The Relations with Other Faiths Working Group seeks to develop wherever possible a commitment to promote respect and tolerance for the integrity of the beliefs of other faiths, cultures and traditions. This desire not only arises from our common humanity but also from a desire to live in peace and goodwill as neighbours in our communities and the world.

The Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths warmly invites you to explore the resources it offers. We hope these resources guide and inspire you to encounter and experience the rich blessings and wisdom that relationships with people of other faiths bring.

Relations with Other Faiths Website
www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/ which includes:

- guidelines and resources for planning interfaith gatherings
- interfaith etiquette guidelines
- information and resources on interfaith dialogue and theology
- papers, articles, and statements on interfaith relations
- information about Australia's religions
- recommended reading list and book reviews
- contact details for Australian religious and interfaith organisations
- upcoming events and recent news

Neighbourhoods of Difference: The Uniting Church in Australia and Interfaith Relations (DVD, 2009)

Living with the Neighbour Who is Different: Christian Faith in a Multi Religious World (Theological Statement, 2000) and study guides

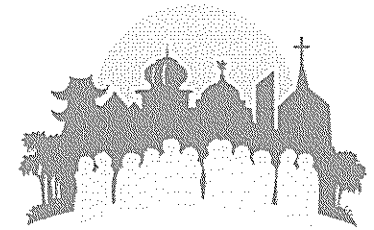
Getting Started: Why engage in interfaith relationships? (DVD, 2006)

From the Cross to the Swastika: Understanding Antisemitism (DVD, 1997) and study guides

For information on how to obtain these resources, visit our website:
www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/

T 02 8267 4482
F 02 8267 4222
E rof@nat.uca.org.au

www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/



Relations with Other Faiths



Relations with Other Faiths

The Uniting Church is part of a multicultural and multireligious society.

In 1985 the Uniting Church declared itself a multicultural church 'acknowledging the changed and changing multicultural and multi-faith context of life and ministry in Australia and the presence of people from culturally diverse backgrounds in its membership'.

In recognising the importance of interfaith relationships and the role of faith in creating and sustaining communities of peace, the Uniting Church Assembly established the Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths in 1989.



Our Mission

The Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths seeks to promote knowledge and understanding of other living world faiths and their communities. It aims to develop wherever possible a commitment to promote respect and tolerance for the integrity of the beliefs of other faiths, cultures and traditions. This desire not only arises from our common humanity but also from a desire to live in peace and goodwill.

The role of the working group is to:

- Provide information, policy and resources on appropriate positive relationships with other faiths to the Assembly.
- Raise awareness within the church of the presence of other faiths in the community, and of their particular needs and place in Australian society.
- Develop resources that may be appropriate for congregations and other bodies to use in multi-faith discussions and gatherings.
- Maintain contact with people of other living world faiths.
- Provide advice and assistance to all councils of the church as requested.
- Collaborate where possible with other agencies and groups interested in multi-faith relationships.
- Reflect on the theological basis on which interfaith dialogue should occur and develop statements and resources for use by the church when working with people of other faiths.

Theology

In 1997 the Eighth Assembly requested the then Doctrine Commission to prepare a theological statement to guide the Uniting Church as it entered an increasingly diverse society where many faiths are practiced. The statement *Living with the Neighbour who is Different: Christian Faith in a Multi Religious World* was presented to the Ninth Assembly which adopted the following theological affirmations as primary values and guiding principles for the Uniting Church's relationship with people of other faiths:

- God is calling us to engage in conversation with people of other faiths.
- Christians are called to love the neighbour who is different.
- God has placed the contemporary Church in an ideal situation to engage in genuine dialogue with those of other faiths.
- God delights in diversity and seeks unity.
- The Spirit is present in all of life.
- The centrality of Jesus Christ in Christian believing is not to be compromised.

Dialogue

The Uniting Church values relationships with people of other faiths and cultures and affirms the place of interfaith dialogue in creating and sustaining a culture of peace and harmony.

In and through interfaith dialogues we meet with other people who share an experience of the Divine as we do. Dialogues cover areas of common interest and concern, explore different themes and issues of faith, and allow questions, confusions, and misconceptions to be explored. Relationships and friendships built in these dialogues have other benefits. They model possibilities of mutual and respectful relationship to the wider community, and assist us to support, encourage and reach out to each other when there are issues and challenges in particular communities. Members of the Uniting Church are involved in a number of dialogue groups, interfaith activities and government consultations on interfaith cooperation.