

# *Other Resources*

To learn about the theology guiding the Uniting Church in its relationships with people of other faiths, you can study the theological resource *Living with the Neighbour who is Different: Christian Faith in a Multi Religious World* which was adopted by the 9th Assembly in 2000:

<http://ow.ly/QQhpp> Study Group Resource: <http://ow.ly/QQhrN>

To explore how Christians give witness to their faith in Christ while living in communities of different religious convictions, read the statement *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* written in 2011 by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA): <http://ow.ly/QQhtO>

## *For schools and young people*

Together for Humanity is a multi-faith organisation dedicated to building a more tolerant Australia through online resources and workshops in schools and the community. The online teaching resource *Difference Differently* includes an interactive Diversity Q & A with diverse Australians sharing thoughts on culture, diversity and belief on video and text: <http://ow.ly/QQhwn>

## *Connect with people of other faiths*

The RoF website has a list of contacts for religious and interfaith organisations in Australia at national, state and local level: <http://ow.ly/QQhA6>

### ***Keep up to date with interfaith news and events:***

Sign up to receive the Relations with Other Faiths newsletter  
<http://www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/>

Like the Relations with Other Faith Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/InterfaithUCA>



# Interfaith September

# *Excerpts from My Way: A Muslim Woman's Journey by Mona Siddiqui*

(In Islam)...God loves when human beings obey. In contrast, Christianity is seen as a religion which is about God's love for man, not man's love for God. Here God loves irrespective of whether human beings obey. There are other pronounced perceptions. Islam is bound by the limits of law, a kind of servile obedience, whereas Christianity believes in God's unlimited love. Christianity stresses that God is understood to be acting in the course of human history, that God is sustaining the world through an act of will. In Islam, there is a sense that though God is near humanity and guides history, through his transcendence he is external to history. Observing some of the historical and present polemics between the two religions, one could legitimately ask if dialogue is not directed at conversion to Christ or to the event of the Qur'an, what is its real purpose? Yet even if we understand God's interaction with humanity in different ways, I would reply that constructive dialogue does not diminish one's faith but rather enlarges it. What we believe, how we listen to others and how we learn are part of the dialogue journey; we can be interested in learning for the sake of learning, for the hope of self-transformation, quite simply by trying to understand the many ways in which others feel God is a presence in their lives.

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As a Muslim who has lived most of her life in the West, I have learnt that faith speaks to faith in many ways. Dialogue has been a process of learning and accepting, of questioning and appreciating, of self-doubt and humility. Most importantly, it has been to understand that talking about a common humanity demands much generosity in the face of practical difference. Engaging in dialogue is an extension of *ihsan* for me, 'To Act knowing that even if you cannot see God, he can see you.' Thus, I sit with Christian theologians who are friends, who are challenging, who are suspicious and with those who are just willing to talk. Personally, I am not interested in pluralism, exclusivism or inclusivism as philosophical systems to work within. My interest lies primarily in the diversity of theological debates that both traditions have about human nature, divine nature and the eternal question of the relationship between God and man. We should always feel that we remain open to thinking about God in new ways.

As the Qur'an itself says:

*And if all the trees on earth were pens and the oceans [were ink], with seven oceans behind it to add, yet the words of God will not be exhausted; for God is exalted in power, full of wisdom. (Q37:27)*

...

Today, belief in God is for most people a personal choice, even if it is viewed as an act of grace. However, I think that once we have committed ourselves to talking about a God who is merciful and loving, a God who intercedes in human history, then we are obliged to rethink not just who we are as people of faith but also what does our faith mean when it comes to engaging with others. When someone stands in front of me, I have the option of listening, holding my hand out in friendship or simply turning away. If we are living in the presence of God, we need to believe in ourselves and in others that our faiths and cultures can have a positive impact and work for the welfare of the wider society, the public good. Silence here is not an option, faith here is not something to be hidden but must be open and generous, especially if it means facing our own fears and prejudices. Our creeds and convictions are intrinsic to our identities but every relationship we have with one another reflects in some way our covenant with God. Life is a series of encounters in which God is always present.

**Source: *My Way: A Muslim Woman's Journey* by Mona Siddiqui, Chapter Four "Christians, Muslims and Dialogue" pp. 123-4, 140-2. (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015).**



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