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“Of one thing
we can be fairly confident:
religion is likely to be the plane
on which this coming centripetal counter-movement
will first declare itself.”

—Arnold J. Toynbee
Civilization on Trial (Excerpts)
Oxford University Press 1948

PREFACE

The Pure Land Learning College Association Inc. (PLLCA), under the guidance of Venerable Master Chin Kung AM, has supported many multicultural and multi-faith activities over the past fifteen years. Lasting peace and harmony for all living beings is the hope that we share with everyone who travels on the same ship that we call planet Earth.

Australian pride lies in its diversity of faith and culture. Queensland is home to people coming from 200 countries and 100 faiths and religions. In Queensland,Toowoomba is a place of distinct characteristics, with residents from eighty different ethnicities and cultures. They each have their own customs and religious beliefs, yet are respectful of the customs and beliefs of others. Toowoomba is able to express its beauty in a multicultural setting just like a magnificent flower garden in which hundreds of different flowers blossom for the visitors to behold.

This book is a collection of photos and text, which documents our journey of peace and harmony. It highlights various community events and activities, which are significant testimony that religious and social harmony is possible through cooperation and interaction. It describes the collective efforts of many good people who journey together in Toowoomba with the hope of bringing this vision into reality. Among them are academics, religious leaders and adherents, community organisations, students, and individuals. Without their diligence and commitment, this journey would not have begun.

It is our hope that this book will serve as a guide for those who wish to explore ways of improving communications in their communities towards the goal of building bridges and social cohesion. In doing so, more people will be able to create their own community of peace and harmony.

For additional information, please contact the office of the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre. We would love to hear from you. You can contact us via our email mfmcc.pllc@gmail.com or at +617 4659 8054. Our address is 57 West St, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350, Australia.

PROFILE OF VENERABLE MASTER CHIN KUNG AM

Venerable Master Chin Kung AM, born in 1927, is an eminent monk in the Pure Land school of Mahayana Buddhism. He has studied Buddhism for more than sixty years and has lectured on it for over fifty years. He is advisor to over 100 Amitabha Buddhist Societies and Pure Land Learning Centers worldwide. In 2001, he founded the Pure Land Learning College Association Inc. (PLLCA) in Toowoomba, Australia.

Venerable Master Chin Kung pioneered propagating the Buddha's teachings via the Internet and satellite television. His lectures have been published in books and recorded on DVDs, CDs, and other media for free distribution. He has sponsored the printing and distribution of the Buddhist Canon, Buddhist sutras, books, images, and books on moral education. All these are distributed free worldwide. To this day, the Venerable Master still teaches tirelessly on a daily basis. His lectures are broadcast live to audiences around the world.

Born in Lujiang County, Anhui Province, China, the Venerable Master studied Buddhism and the classics under the guidance of Professor Fang Dongmei, a great philosopher of his time; Zhangjia Living Buddha, a renowned monk of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition; and Mr Li Bingnan, a lay practitioner and master of Buddhism and Confucianism. In 1959, Master Chin Kung became a monk at Linji Temple in Yuanshan, Taipei, and was given the Dharma name Chin Kung, which means "pure emptiness". He has served as an instructor at the Tripitaka Institute at Shipu Temple, a professor of the School of Philosophy at the Chinese Culture University, and a president of the Chinese Buddhist College.

For his achievements in building interfaith harmony and fostering peace, Venerable

Master Chin Kung has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees and professorships by the University of Queensland, Griffith University, and the University of Southern Queensland, in Australia; and the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia. He is the Honorary Founding Patron of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland.



In 2005, Venerable Master Chin Kung was awarded Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division by Queen Elizabeth II. He was recognized for service to the Buddhist community in Queensland, particularly in the propagation of Buddhism and the fostering of interfaith activities between diverse ethnic groups, and to the community through his support for educational and health institutions.

In 2006, Venerable Master Chin Kung and the PLLCA were invited by UNESCO to co-organize the event "Celebrating the 2550th Birth Anniversary of the Buddha" at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. The subject of the event was "Discover the Buddhist Contribution to Humanity", to enable more people to learn from the Buddha how to reconcile conflict and promote social stability and world peace through education. The goal was to prove that through the moral teachings of sages and saints, it is possible to teach people to be good and to teach those of different faiths to live together harmoniously.

In 2009, Venerable Master Chin Kung was appointed an International Trustee of Religions for Peace, an international peace organization that is active on every continent. Its mission is to create multi-religious partnerships to confront issues such as stopping war, ending poverty, and protecting the earth.

Since the late 1990s, Venerable Master



Venerable Master Chin Kung sharing the success story of Lujiang at UNESCO Headquarters in 2006

Chin Kung has both initiated and participated in interfaith forums and summits in many countries speaking on the importance of education. He explains that it is imperative that all religious teachers sincerely "learn to be a teacher and act as a role model for all". He encourages these teachers to practice the teachings of the sages and saints in their daily lives, delve deeply into the teachings of their own religions, and humbly learn from other religions.



In December 2011, at the ten-year anniversary celebration of the PLLCA, many faith and community leaders, including the former mayor of Toowoomba, Cr Peter Taylor, expressed their wish and support to make Toowoomba a Model City of Peace and Harmony for the whole world. This action is a deeply meaningful and insightful one. It is an endeavour of

the highest order. Subsequently, political leaders, including the current Mayor, Cr Paul Antonio, have expressed their full support for this vision of establishing Toowoomba as a Model City of Peace and Harmony.



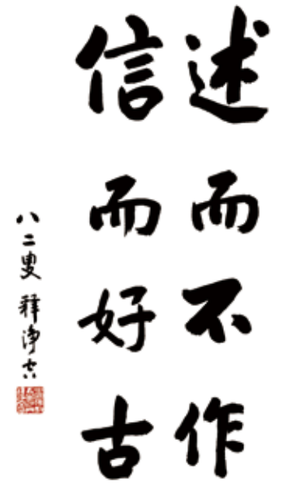
Keynote Address by Venerable Master Chin Kung on 'The Doctrinal Premises and Core Teachings in Achieving Peace & Harmony' at the forum 'Building Bridges, Sharing Humanity: Everyone Matters' on 10 October 2014



Keynote Address by Venerable Master Chin Kung on 'The Road Ahead from Ecumenism to Interfaith – A Buddhist Perspective'at a forum jointly organized with Toowoomba Churches Together on 12 March 2016



Currently, Venerable Master Chin Kung is lecturing on the *Infinite Life Sutra*, with the hope that the daily teachings can transform the current mindsets of people today and help foster world peace. His message of loving-kindness and compassion for all has been the central theme of his teaching. Harbouring thoughts of sincerity, respect, humility, harmony, and dedication to help all beings to gain long-lasting happiness and joy has been his life.



Confucius said, "I transmit and teach what I have learnt from the ancient masters, and never create anything of my own. I believe in and love to follow the ancients."



In August 2002, Venerable Master Chin Kung was awarded Honorary Professorship and Doctorate Degree from Griffith University.



In 2003, Venerable Master Chin Kung was awarded Honorary Professorship and Honorary PhD by University of Queensland and Griffith University in Australia.



In September 2004, the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University commended Venerable Master Chin Kung for his effort in establishing world peace and conferred an Honorary Doctorate Degree to him, a first for a non-Muslim.



In December 2003, the University of Queensland conferred an honorary professorship on the Venerable Master Chin Kung, recognizing his remarkable contributions to the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.



In April 2016, the University of Wales awarded Master Chin Kung an honorary degree, Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*, for services and support to intercultural and interfaith activities.



In July 2016, the Venerable Master Chin Kung was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, for his achievement in the study of ancient Chinese culture.



In July 2016, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David awarded the Venerable Master Chin Kung an honorary professorship, in recognition of his outstanding international leadership and the promotion of interfaith studies in furthering global understanding.

"The Gods who are worshipped by different religions are actually one entity, and likewise, their teachings are essentially the same; thus religions should treat each other equally and get along with one another in harmony. This is the shared aspiration of everyone who strives to establish a rapport among different religions. We cherish the achievements of science, but at the same time, faith is necessary because humans cannot afford to abandon ethics and morality, which have already been elaborated in the teachings of every religious canon. We need to excerpt 360 quotes of essential teachings from these religious canons into a booklet and practice them throughout our life. Religions should act as educators just as they did during their founding times, different religions should learn from each other and their followers should be role models of morality in their local community. This is essential for our world to secure lasting peace and harmony, to end all kinds of wars and the only approach to bring real happiness to everyone globally."

--Venerable Master Chin Kung AM
Excerpted from "2014 Lecture Series on the Exegesis of The Infinite Life Sutra", Episode 279



WORLD PEACE BEGINS WITH RELIGIOUS HARMONY



As everyone knows, religious beliefs and faiths are powerful spiritual forces. However, if such devotion of faith and passion are misled and become confrontational and incite conflicts, they will bring disaster—even annihilation—to humanity. Historically, religious wars and conflicts all proved this point. On the other hand, if these forces were to be guided in a good way such that people from different religions and faiths learn from and understand one another, then eventually religions could cooperate in unity and friendship. This strong, concerted force of faith will melt away all forces of negativity and darkness, and resolve all conflicts and confrontations. It will bring peace, harmony, happiness, and stability to humanity.

All religions are based on the teachings of one true god whose wisdom is fundamentally "benevolence, compassion, and universal love". From this perspective, all religions can cooperate with one another in unity.

- The Christian sacred texts say, "God loves all people" and "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another."

- Islam teaches, "Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate." and "There's only one guideline for being moral. It's being selfless, do good with universal love for all."
- Zoroastrianism teaches, " One should love others as oneself. This is as the faith of man should be."
- Sikhism teaches, "More than all else do I treasure at heart is love, which makes me live an eternal life in this mundane world."
- Baha'ism teaches, "The purpose of the one true God manifesting Himself to our world is to summon all mankind to uphold truthfulness, sincerity, filial piety, and trustworthiness."
- Buddhism teaches in the *Infinite Life Sutra*, "Revere the saints and respect the decent [people]. Be benevolent, compassionate, and universally loving."
- Jainism teaches, "The universe is not for man alone, but it is a theatre of evolution for all living beings. Live and let live is its guiding principle."
- Judaism teaches, "Hatred stirreth up strifes; But love covereth all transgressions."
- Hinduism teaches, "... None who performs good (deeds) comes to an evil end."
- Taoism teaches, "Offer kindness to others without seeking reward and without regrets."

THE FOUR CONDITIONS

In 2005, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir, asked Venerable Master Chin Kung if our world would ever be peaceful again? Venerable Master Chin Kung's reply was that if we can fulfill four conditions, then it is possible for peace to become a reality.

When Dr Mahathir asked what the four conditions were, Venerable Master Chin Kung said that first of all, all countries need to treat one another equally and get along harmoniously. Then, the same applied to political parties, ethnic groups, and religious groups. If these four conditions could be met, and everyone treated one another equally and got along harmoniously, conflicts could be resolved and peace would be realized.

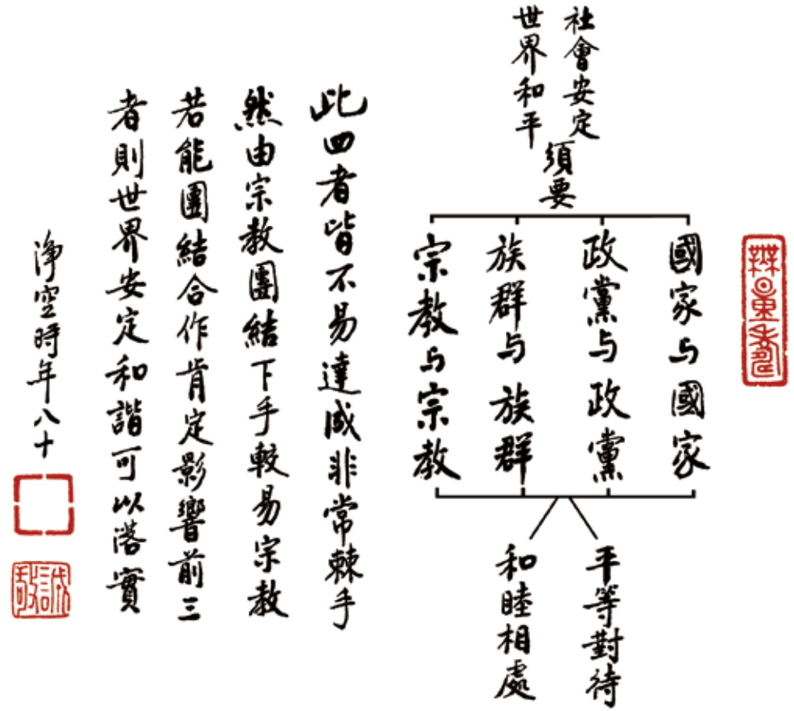
Upon hearing those words, Dr Mahathir was silent for a while but understood



Dr Mahathir, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, met up with Venerable Master Chin Kung for the first time in Oct 2005, and asked about ways to resolve conflicts and disasters around the world. Venerable Master said that uniting different religions will bring harmony among countries, political groups and races – a point that Dr Mahathir strongly agreed.

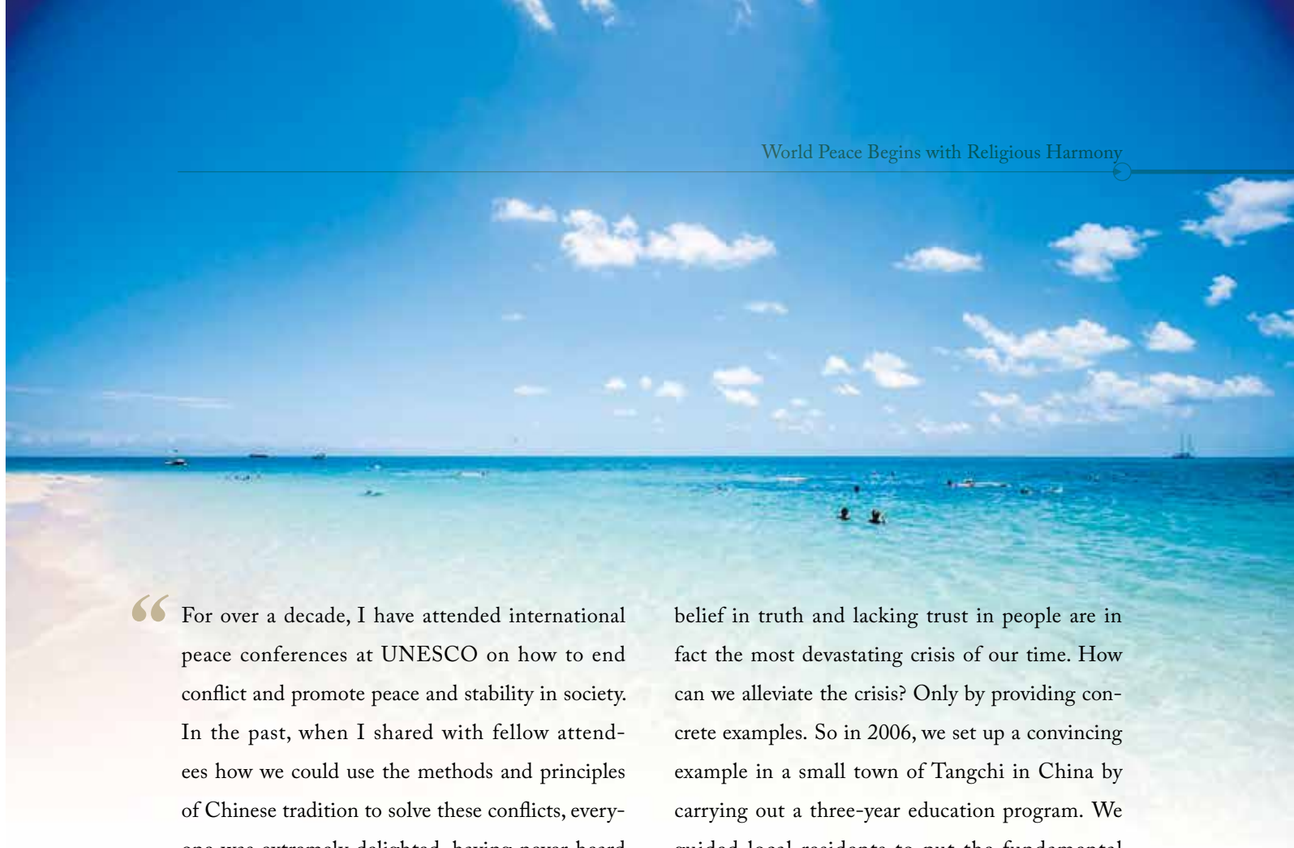
immediately when Master Chin Kung said that although these conditions were truly difficult and complicated to fulfill, if we started with religious harmony and cooperation, then they could be achieved.

For many years, Venerable Master Chin Kung has reported to various peace conferences initiated by the UN and UNESCO in different countries. He presented the wisdom, methods, and experiences from Chinese ancestors, saints, and sages in the area of achieving good governance for a nation. Many participants were pleased to hear about these ancient teachings but they expressed doubt about its practicality. The only way to increase confidence for everyone was to establish a place with a peaceful experimental model in order to prove the validity of the teachings.



In order to achieve social stability and world peace,
there must be impartiality and harmonious living among nations,
among political factions, among ethnic groups, and among religions.
It is not easy to accomplish this. In fact, it is extremely difficult.
But when we begin by focusing on religious cooperation it will be easier.
If religions can come together and cooperate with one another,
then this is bound to influence nations, political factions, and ethnic groups.
In this way, world peace and harmony will be realized.

Chin Kung, at the age of eighty



"For over a decade, I have attended international peace conferences at UNESCO on how to end conflict and promote peace and stability in society. In the past, when I shared with fellow attendees how we could use the methods and principles of Chinese tradition to solve these conflicts, everyone was extremely delighted, having never heard such ideas discussed before. However, during the lunch after the meeting, I was told more than once that these principles and approaches were too idealistic to be practiced in life! When I heard this, I felt extremely surprised and thought why would people think this way? Finally, I have realized that the problem is that people tend to doubt the truth told by ancient saints and sages. Indeed, losing belief in truth and lacking trust in people are in fact the most devastating crisis of our time. How can we alleviate the crisis? Only by providing concrete examples. So in 2006, we set up a convincing example in a small town of Tangchi in China by carrying out a three-year education program. We guided local residents to put the fundamental Confucian teachings of *"Guide to a Happy Life (Di Zi Gui),"* into practice. Every teacher served as a role model for citizens to follow, and every citizen, man or woman, young or old, was involved in the intensive public education program. The program was such a great success that it has proved the efficacy of the traditional principles and methods in solving modern social problems."

--Venerable Master Chin Kung AM
Excerpted from "2014 Lecture Series on the Exegesis of The Infinite Life Sutra", Episode 111

LUJIANG PROJECT OF HARMONY

Thus, in 2005 Venerable Master Chin Kung went to the town of Lujiang in Anhui Province, China, to perform a demonstration. For three years, teachers and students of the centre cultivated themselves to serve as role models in their moral conduct to all the villagers. Traditional Chinese culture, using *Guidelines for Being a Good Person (Di Zi Gui)*, was promoted as the basic teaching material. These teachings promoted social cohesion and taught about peace and harmony. It was beyond anyone's expectation that within a few months, great results were realised. The divorce rate of the town went down. The crime rate dropped. More people talked about family unity and engaged in neighbourly exchanges than before. Even the streets were much cleaner and people changed for the better. The face of this 48,000 populated town was almost brand new.

These results show us that the innate nature of humanity is filled with purity and goodness. People eagerly seek to have a harmonious society and community. But most people simply do not know the means to achieve it. Once a way is found, hope is within sight, and then most people are willing to do their best to see it realized.



















This exhibition at UNESCO in 2006 showed the success of the Lujiang's project. It is modelled along the Guidelines of Being a Good Person (Di Zi Gui)

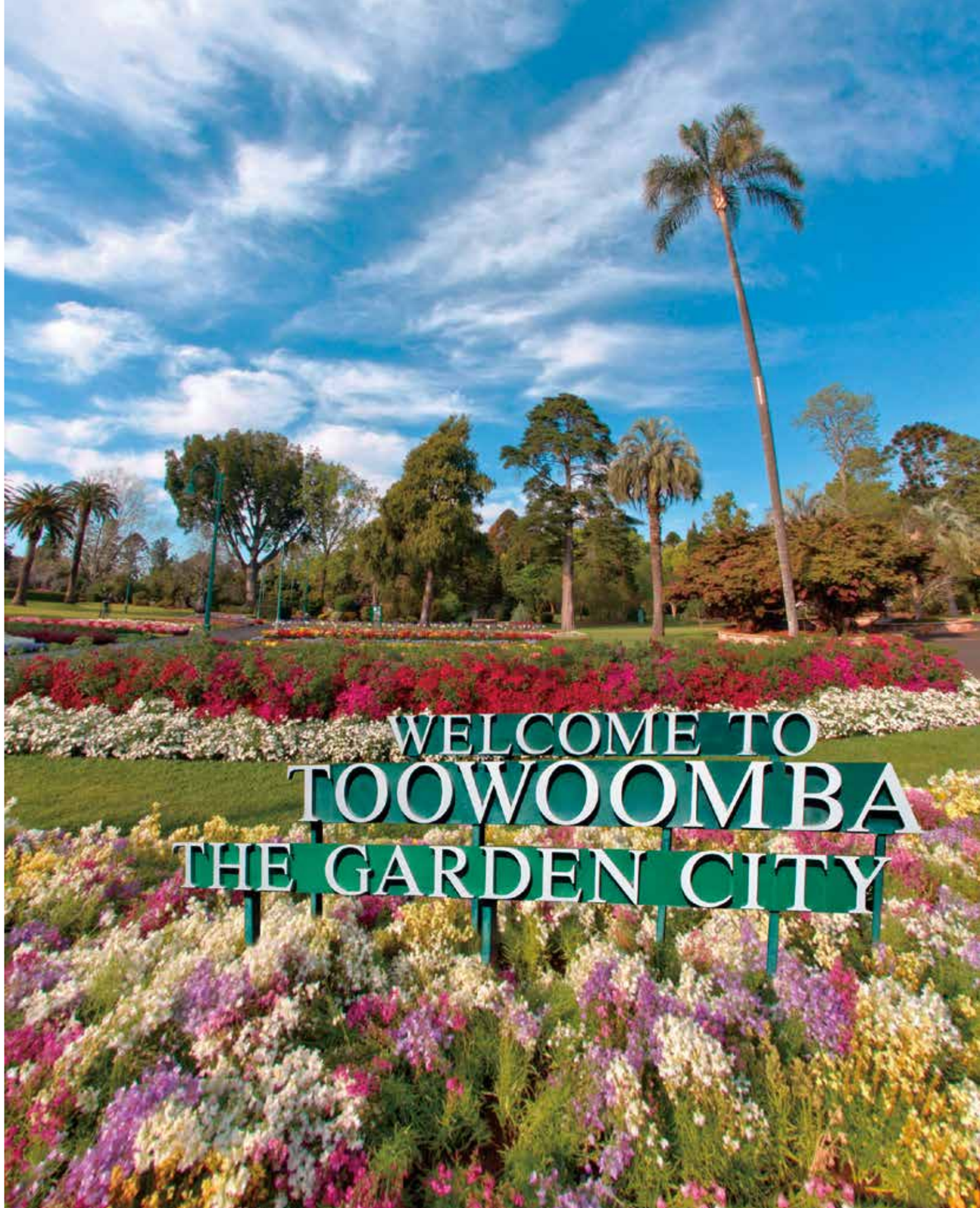


TOOWOOMBA: A MODEL CITY OF PEACE AND HARMONY

Since its establishment in 2001 by Venerable Master Chin Kung, the Pure Land Learning College Association has hosted a Friendship Dinner every Saturday followed by talks on cultural diversity. Representatives from different faith traditions are able to communicate in harmony and peace, while residents are caring and kind to one another. The community feels at home here just like members of a big family.



Community Friendship Dinner hosted by Venerable Master in Toowoomba. In its sixteenth year, the Friendship Dinner has been a platform where community members from diverse cultures and faiths share stories and learn of their beliefs and cultures from each other over dinner. Subjects covered included morality, virtues, customs, traditions, beliefs, and practices



In February 2009, Griffith University and the PLLCA hosted the 'One Humanity, Many Faiths' Interfaith Summit in Brisbane City Hall. Over 400 people from 148 religious organizations from Australia and Asian countries, and leaders from political and financial sectors attended. There was much positive feedback resonating with the theme of the event. These experiences have shown us that all religions and faith traditions in the world are members of one big family. As one family, religious harmony can be realized.



Interfaith Summit: 'One Humanity, Many Faiths' held in Brisbane City Hall, February 2009

At a forum in December 2011, Venerable Master Chin Kung met several faith leaders and discussed the vision of making Toowoomba a Model City of Peace and Harmony. There was a spontaneous response showing that this is a very noble and inspiring vision, and that is when the journey began.With the success of Lujiang as a point of demonstration, community members who were ready to help build Toowoomba into a Model City of Peace and Harmony had a clear direction and point of reference.







Interfaith forum held at the University of Southern Queensland in December 2011

Toowoomba has a very diverse multicultural and multifaith community. Strengthening social cohesion and building bridges among its diverse communities and stakeholders is going to be a long and challenging journey.

By virtue of the strong support from faith and community leaders in Toowoomba, Australia, we are offering a plan of action towards achieving the vision of establishing Toowoomba as a Model City of Peace and Harmony.

PLAN OF ACTION

In pursuit of this vision, the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre of the Pure Land Learning College Association was established. Muhammed Haniff Abdul Razak, a senior faith worker from Singapore, was employed to promote religious dialogue and cohesion in Toowoomba.

Making Toowoomba a Model City of Peace and Harmony will require leadership and guidance from each religion to realize peace and harmony. It also has to include every segment of the community to take ownership of this vision. As part of the strategy to achieve peace and harmony, it is important that each member of the community becomes actively involved. The need to understand, accept, and actively support the vision of creating a community of peace and harmony is important.

To achieve this goal and to help us chart our journey, we are guided by a strategic road map and yearly action plan developed by the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre. The strategic road map covers the vision, mission, strategic objectives, and core programs. We placed great emphasis on dialogues at all levels, religious education, training, forums, workshops, community integration activities, focus group discussions, and exchange programs.

Strategic Road Map

VISION

To help facilitate Toowoomba as a Model City of Peace and Harmony

MISSION

To strengthen religious and social harmony through greater appreciation of diversity in faiths and beliefs across multicultural communities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To facilitate interfaith engagement and multicultural programs targeted at leaders, organizations and the communities

To facilitate and nurture the community towards greater social trust

CORE PROGRAMMES



"The Four All-Embracing Methods are the principles of public relationships taught by Buddha Shakyamuni:

The first method is to give unsparingly, which means to present gifts and to invite guests often. Then everyone around us will be happy and they will be willing to treat each other like brothers and sisters.

The second is to speak only kind words. We praise others and our words demonstrate our concern for others, our sincere intention to support others rather than cheating or sabotaging the deeds of others.

The third is to be beneficial to others. Whatever we do should be supportive and beneficial to others.

The fourth is comradeship and cooperation, which means to share the same values. We should strive to achieve common goals and to fulfill common aspirations."

--Venerable Master Chin Kung AM
Excerpted from "2014 Lecture Series on the Exegesis of The Infinite Life Sutra", Episode 102



THE FOUR ALL-EMBRACING METHODS

How do we promote the idea of building Toowoomba as a model city of harmony? As a guiding principle, the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre adopts the Four All-Embracing Methods to develop core programs in achieving the vision.

The Four All-Embracing Methods are the doctrinal premise at the heart of the model city. In short, the four methods are the methods of interacting with the public. They are:

- **Practice of Giving** – This refers to the generosity demonstrated through the giving of one's time and effort.
- **Kind Words** – This refers to truthful words that are caring and beneficial to others, and that can help facilitate communication.
- **Beneficial Acts** – This refers to the way one does things that can benefit others, which includes reaching out to help them without hesitation.
- **Cooperation** – This refers to actively engaging in each other's programs and activities while learning from each other. Cooperation can also help to strengthen relationships and promote greater trust.

Following the call to make Toowoomba a Model City of Peace and Harmony, the delegates from Toowoomba have presented papers at UNESCO since 2013 on the progress of our journey. This is working towards the hope of inviting the ambassadors to Toowoomba to experience the unity among the diverse religions, faiths and ethnic groups living side by side harmoniously.


Local News

City spreads peace, love

thoughts of to UNESCO

Toowoomba delegates led by the Mayor presenting the way to making Toowoomba a Model City of Peace and Harmony in 24 May 2013



Delegates from Toowoomba presented at UNESCO on 22 May 2014 on 'Toowoomba, The Model City of Peace and Harmony – The journey so far…'. The panel discussion was facilitated by H.E. Mr. George Mina, the Australian Ambassador to UNESCO.





A group of delegates from Toowoomba presenting on 'Achieving Harmony through Education' at the forum 'Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue – Fostering World Peace through Cultural Education' held on 28 May 2015 at UNESCO.



Group photo of the international speakers with Venerable Master Chin Kung at the UNESCO International Peace Conference in September 2016



Prayer for world peace by the faith representatives at the UNESCO International Peace Conference on 14 September 2016



Presentation by the Toowoomba delegates, chaired by H.E. George Mina, the Australia Ambassador to UNESCO



Group Photo of the Australian delegates with Venerable Master Chin Kung and H.E. George Mina, the Australia Ambassador to UNESCO







The 360 Peace & Harmony Exhibition held at UNESCO in conjunction with the International Peace Conference from 14 - 16 September 2016.

www.thechronicle.com.au

Local News



TOOWOOMBA DELEGATES: Spreading the message of peace and harmony are (from left) Andrew Wielandt, Mark Creedon, Franco Filipetto, Belinda Sanders, Kim Walmsley, Meiling Chow, Muhammed Haniff and Jonathan Inkpin. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

City closer to peace model

Meghan Harris
meghan.harris
@thechronicle.com.au

AFTER five years, Pure Land Learning College is closer than ever in its journey towards turning Toowoomba into a model city of peace and harmony.

A group of nine Toowoomba residents recently returned from Paris after spreading the message of peace at the UNESCO headquarters.

Head of the Multi-faith and Multicultural Centre Muhammed Haniff said the goal was to bring the UNESCO ambassadors to our city.

"Our vision is to establish Toowoomba as a city of peace and harmony," Mr Haniff said.

"We have been working hard to show the ambassadors that we are building an inclusive society. This year we were able to present our case with more substance than we have been able to in the past.

"We had a meeting with the ambassadors and they said they really want to come to Toowoomba to see how we are achieving peace and harmony within our community," he said.

The group of representatives had a two-hour window to promote our region at the UNESCO forum.

Mr Haniff said it was the composition of the team that made it so strong this year.

"Our team had many different members from around the community, ranging from faith leaders, community members to education representatives," Mr Haniff said.

"We got the message across to the ambassadors and it is very likely they will come to Toowoomba next year.

"We really have something that excites them and give them an opportunity to see for themselves.

"I always say if you want something you have to act on it and it has been a work in progress but it is all finally coming together," he said.

EVERYONE MATTERS . . . THE JOURNEY SO FAR

In the pursuit of our vision of helping to establish Toowoomba as a model city of peace and harmony, we endeavor to work with every segment of the community; but this is not always an easy journey. Our journey has at times been strenuous, unsettled, and occasionally complex even occasionally ending in quarrels. We are a community of many ethnicities representing different cultures, customs, traditions, and beliefs, all living together. Such a diversity of people will most certainly emphasize the many differences as well as similarities. We are able to work around the differences to strengthen social cohesion and acknowledge the similarities to promote religious and social harmony.

Toowoomba, one of the largest inland cities in Australia, is noted for its spirit of voluntarism and generosity in helping others. This is our asset, for although the citizens of Toowoomba are from diverse backgrounds, they are respectful of the customs and beliefs of others.

As part of our strategy to achieve peace and harmony, it is important that each member of the community become actively involved. The need to understand, accept, and actively support the vision of creating a community of peace and harmony is important. Therefore, to achieve this goal the community must be involved. The next section will identify and describe various parts of the community and provide examples of activities that promote social cohesion and greater social trust.



Carnival of Flowers: Peace and Harmony float in 2012 and 2013







For Heaven and Earth,
we vow to cultivate a universal love
for every thing and every being.
For all people,
we vow to dedicate our lives to benefit them all.
For the past saints and sages,
we vow to ceaselessly carry on their eternal teachings.
For the countless generations to come,
we vow to bring lasting peace and harmony.

Chin Kung, at the age of eighty-nine

LEADERSHIP

Inspiration and encouragement from the leadership is vital to the success of making the vision a reality.





The Queensland Police Commissioner, Mr. Ian Stewart, speaking at the Peace Education Forum (left) and with Venerable Wu Shin and Bishop Robert McGuckin (right)



Mayor of Toowoomba, Cr Paul Antonio, addressing the community at the Australia Day celebrations at Pure Land Learning College Association.

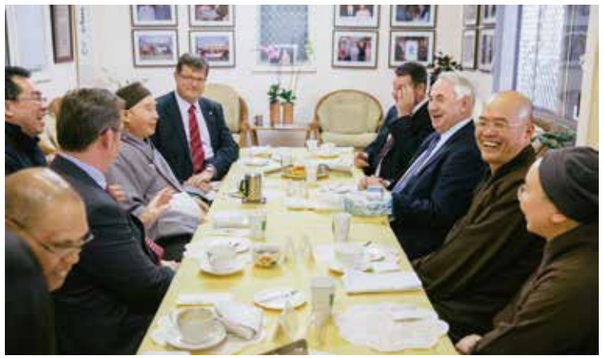




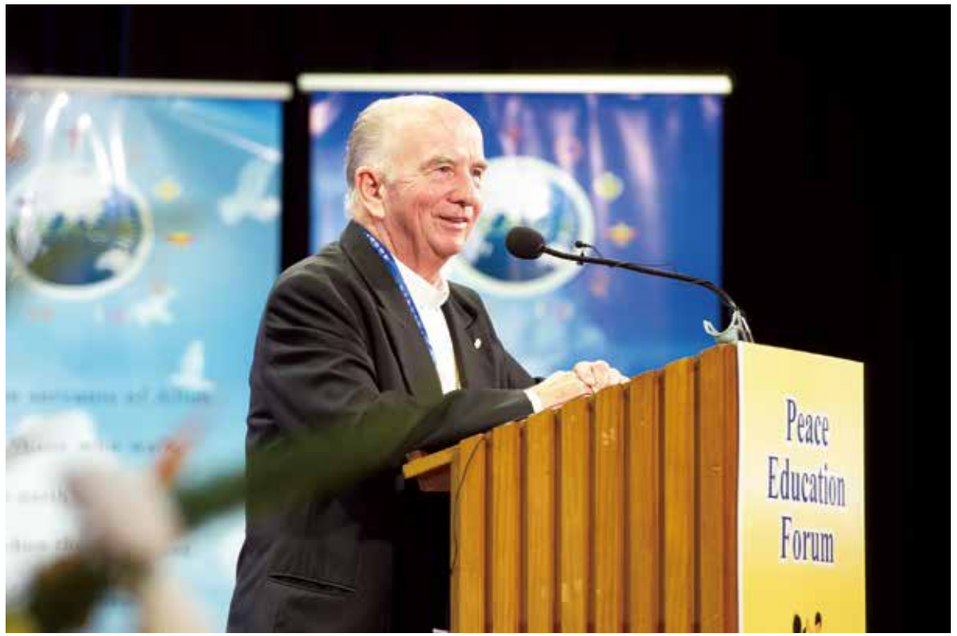
Mayor Paul Antonio spoke at UNESCO and presented the Honorary Citizen of Toowoomba to Venerable Master Chin Kung



Group photo of Venerable Master Chin Kung and the Toowoomba delegates



Lunch and dialogue with
Minister Dr. John McVeigh MP,
Trevor Watts MP,
and Mayor Paul Antonio







Most Reverend Bishop Robert McGuckin, Catholic Bishop of Toowoomba addressing the forum in a plenary titled “Inclusive and Integration – A Religious Perspective” and having lunch and dialogue with Venerable Master





The Right Reverend Cameron Venables, Bishop for the Western region of Brisbane Diocese, giving a keynote speech on 'Towards Greater Interfaith and Intercommunity Engagement and Understanding' at the Peace Education Forum (left), and in a dialogue with Venerable Master



John Agnew, Chairperson of Uniting Church Presbytery of The Downs, in a dialogue with Venerable Master Chin Kung

The following letters of support are from Toowoomba's leaders. These were written before a delegation from Toowoomba embarked on trip to UNESCO to present a paper on 'Achieving Harmony through Education'.

Cr Paul Antonio
MAYOR

Office of the Mayor



Toowoomba Regional Council » City Hall, 541 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba
PO Box 3021, Toowoomba Qld 4350 P 07 4688 6433 F 07 4631 9170 M 0429 954 109
E paul.antonio@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au W www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au

Toowoomba is a city rich in tradition, yet bold in ambition. Home to more than 160,000 residents, the lifestyle on offer has always been recognised as one of the city's most endearing features.

Gifting residents the very best of both city and country living, Toowoomba has traditionally been known as the 'Garden City'. The title, a reflection of the rich soil, temperate climate, and strong community pride that exists in our community.

As a city, we are relatively young, in fact, just over 100 years old. Therefore by its very nature, Toowoomba is a melting pot of remarkable cultural diversity. Hand in hand with that cultural diversity there is of course, diversity in faith, beliefs, customs and practices.

Fortunately, there is also strong community will, and a special shared goal, to live peacefully and harmoniously with those from different cultures and creeds. Our residents know that underneath that diversity is the one thing that binds us all, our humanity.

As leaders, my colleagues and I work hard to ensure every member of our community feels welcomed and valued and indeed, that we learn from one and other. Anything we can do to make our community more inclusive, more respectful, more accepting of other creeds, the better our home will be. Therefore, I thank Pureland Learning College for their vision to see Toowoomba recognised as a model city of peace and harmony.

We must do what we can to preserve and treasure the distinct features of this nation's diverse faiths and cultures, and indeed celebrate their presence in our local community. We are keen to share our humble journey toward becoming a model city of peace and harmony with other communities.

After all, *'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'* Laozi.

Paul Antonio – Mayor, Toowoomba Regional Council

Remain in my love
Jn 15:9



6 May 2015

I am delighted to be able to recognise and celebrate the cultural and religious harmony that exists in our local Toowoomba community. While it has not been without its challenges, Toowoomba continues to work at building a community based on peace and harmony where strong friendships are forged from authenticity and honesty. The work of the Pure Land Learning Centre actively promotes collaboration and cooperation in this spirit of mutual respect and acceptance.

Pope Francis has stated that "Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world". I welcome the dialogue and friendship that characterises the relationship we have in Toowoomba between the various faith traditions. In times of crisis, civic leaders, church representatives and community members come together to be a witness to our unity and a sign of solidarity with each other.

I am thankful for the respectful dialogue and friendship that exists in our community and for all who work to build unity and harmony.

+R. McGuckin

Most Reverend Robert M McGuckin, DD, MCL, JCL
Bishop of Toowoomba

Bishops Office, PO Box 756, Toowoomba Qld 4350
Tel: (+61 7) 4632 4277 • Fax: (+61 7) 4639 2251 • Email: bishop@twb.catholic.org.au

Anglican Church Southern Queensland

14th June 2016

We live in a time where escalating levels of conflict and violence are motivated by differences in religious belief, language and culture. Poverty, prejudice and desperation have resulted in terrible violence such that many millions are either internally displaced, or have fled as refugees to neighbouring countries. However, when people committed to peace and justice come together from different parts of the global family I think there is opportunity for mutual learning and growth.

As an Anglican Bishop I give thanks for the long-standing commitment to peace and harmony from the leaders of faith communities, local government, and businesses in the culturally diverse city of Toowoomba in Australia. I am particularly grateful for the ongoing work and commitment of the Pure Land Learning College Association in Toowoomba to harmony, mutual respect and dialogue.

The proposal to bring respected scholars, peace makers, and national representatives together for an interfaith forum in Toowoomba in December 2016 is one of the exciting initiatives from Pure Land that will strengthen and develop a global network of people and communities committed to peace. I fully support the proposal and look forward to welcoming the delegates to Toowoomba - 'The Garden City' – later this year.

Yours Sincerely,

+Cameron Venables

The Right Reverend Cameron Venables
Bishop for the Western Region

Contact Details:
Phone: (07) 4639 1875
Mobile: 0419 784 456
Fax: (07) 4632 6882

The Right Reverend Cameron Venables
Bishop for the Western Region
Email: CVenables@anglicanchurchsq.org.au

Postal Address:
PO Box 2600
Toowoomba Q 4350

The Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane ABN 32 025 287 736

Parliament of Australia
House of Representatives

IAN MACFARLANE MP
Federal Member for Groom

4 May 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Pure Land Learning College Association Inc, located in Toowoomba, is taking a delegation to the Paris Conference of UNESCO from 27 May to 29 May 2015.

During the time Pure Land has been in Toowoomba it has done much to promote the city as a place of peace and harmony. It holds regular events at its centre bringing together the members of many diverse groups within our community. Events are also held for those less fortunate, promoting a generosity of spirit among attendees.

The Centre has grown since its inception under the direction of Haniff Abdulrazak, who has many years of experience in activities of this nature.

The Toowoomba community has benefited greatly from the activities of the Pure Land Learning College with an awareness of the promotion of peace and harmony in addition to religious and social harmony in our diverse community.

Yours sincerely

Ian Macfarlane MP
Member for Groom
Minister for Industry and Science

John McVeigh MP
MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH



I have much pleasure in supporting the Pure Land Learning College Association's delegation to Paris UNESCO 2015.

The Pure Land Learning College Association makes a significant contribution to this community and I strongly support their vision for Toowoomba to become a model city of peace and harmony.

UNESCO have shown their considerable interest in this pursuit and it is the hope of the wider Toowoomba community to host a delegation from UNESCO in our city in the near future.

The Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba formed in 2012 and Pure Land Learning College Association are strongly supported by Toowoomba Regional Council; Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Queensland Police Service; local State and Federal Members of Parliament and leaders of faith communities (including our Anglican and Catholic Bishops).

I am delighted that there is diverse community representation travelling to Paris as part of an upcoming delegation to UNESCO. The delegates encompasses multi-faith, Aboriginal, community and business representatives.

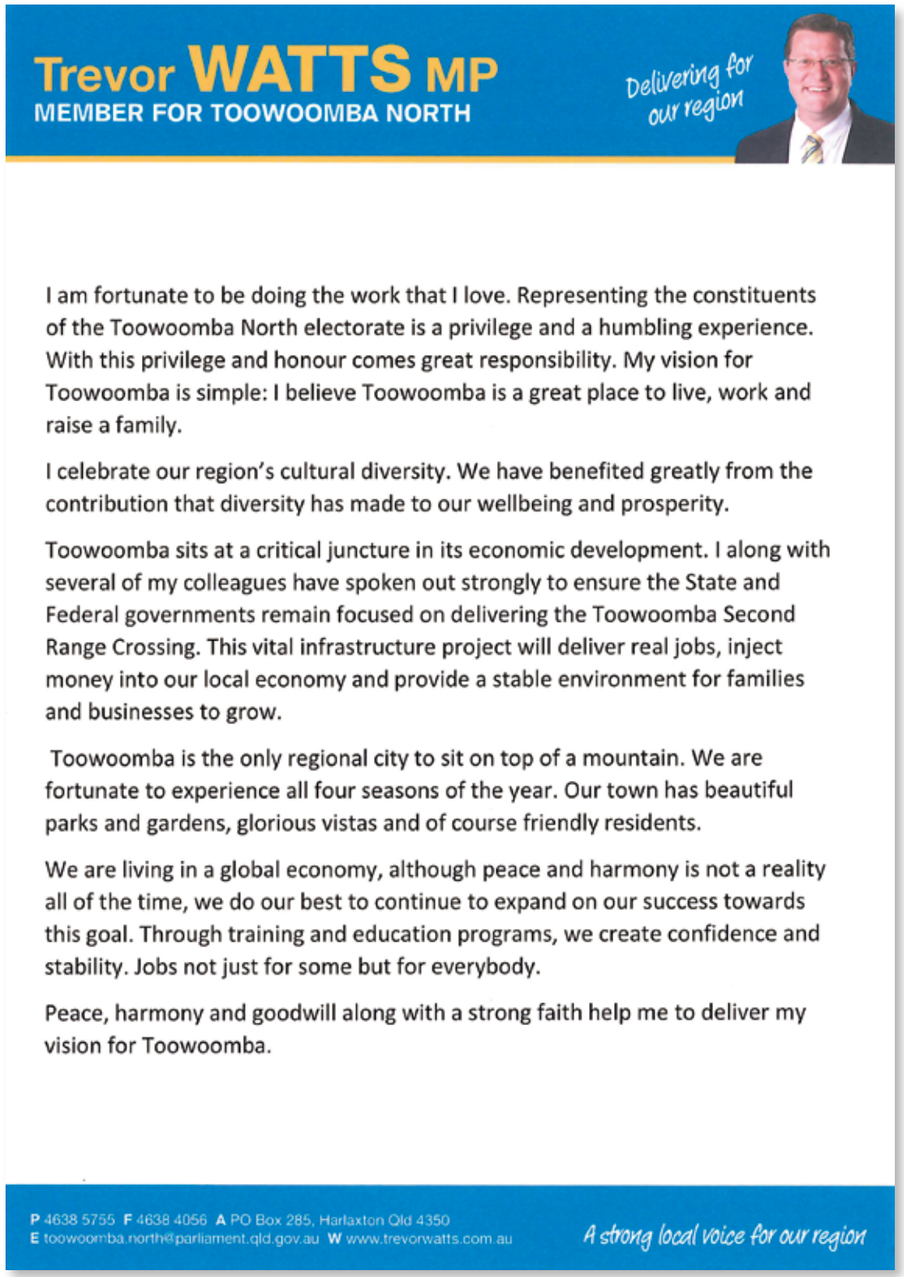
It is very worthy of note, that members of this Delegation have been instrumental in pulling our community together, following the recent firebombing of the Toowoomba Mosque.

This delegation is comprised of respected representatives from our community and I have much pleasure in supporting their endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Dr John McVeigh MP
Shadow Minister for Science, Information Technology and Innovation
Member for Toowoomba South

566 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350 • PO Box 3005, Toowoomba QLD 4350
P 4639 1199 F 4639 1045 E toowoomba.south@parliament.qld.gov.au W www.johnmcveighmp.com JohnMcVeighMP



Trevor WATTS MP
MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Delivering for our region

I am fortunate to be doing the work that I love. Representing the constituents of the Toowoomba North electorate is a privilege and a humbling experience. With this privilege and honour comes great responsibility. My vision for Toowoomba is simple: I believe Toowoomba is a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I celebrate our region's cultural diversity. We have benefited greatly from the contribution that diversity has made to our wellbeing and prosperity.

Toowoomba sits at a critical juncture in its economic development. I along with several of my colleagues have spoken out strongly to ensure the State and Federal governments remain focused on delivering the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. This vital infrastructure project will deliver real jobs, inject money into our local economy and provide a stable environment for families and businesses to grow.

Toowoomba is the only regional city to sit on top of a mountain. We are fortunate to experience all four seasons of the year. Our town has beautiful parks and gardens, glorious vistas and of course friendly residents.

We are living in a global economy, although peace and harmony is not a reality all of the time, we do our best to continue to expand on our success towards this goal. Through training and education programs, we create confidence and stability. Jobs not just for some but for everybody.

Peace, harmony and goodwill along with a strong faith help me to deliver my vision for Toowoomba.

P 4638 5755 F 4638 4056 A PO Box 285, Harlaxton Qld 4350
E toowoomba.north@parliament.qld.gov.au W www.trevorwatts.com.au

A strong local voice for our region

自天子以至於庶
人一切以脩身為本
宇清國安家和人樂
一切以教學為先

Everyone, from the ruler to the common people,
must regard cultivation of oneself
as most essential. To establish a stable country
and a harmonious family,
education is foremost.

BUSINESS

Besides providing economic stability, the business segment has a responsibility to ensure integrity and accountability in conducting its business, and also a social responsibility in helping to strengthen social cohesion in the community.



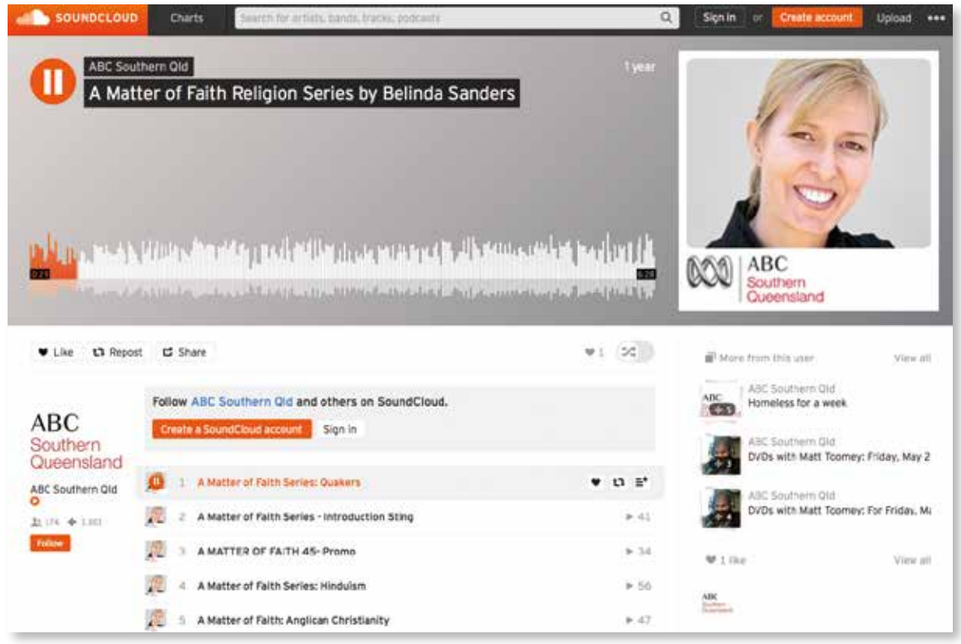
Andrew Wielandt, President of Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, presenting on 'Achieving Harmony through Education from a Business Perspective' at the forum 'Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue – Fostering World Peace through Cultural Education' held on 28 May 2015



Conflict Resolution Workshop with participants from Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Future Leaders.

MEDIA

The media is a powerful resource that relays information to the wider community. In Toowoomba, we work closely with two radio stations, broadcasting religious teachings to the wider community. The purpose is to help promote a better understanding of the richness of our multicultural and multi-faith society.



'A Matter of Faith' on ABC Radio

'A Matter of Faith' on ABC Southern Queensland has been hosted by Belinda Sanders since April 2014. The faiths involved are Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Baha'ism, Quakerism, and Christadelphians. This program was also a finalist for the Premier's Cultural Diversity Awards in 2014, which recognizes the valuable contributions of Queenslanders who support the state's cultural diversity and help build an inclusive, harmonious community. Past series are available at https://soundcloud.com/abc-southern-qld/sets/a-matter-of-faith-religion.



'Voices of Faith' on FM102.7

'Voices of Faith' aired every Tuesday and Sunday from 7-7:30pm over the local radio station FM102.7 is a community platform to share cultures, traditions, ethnicity, beliefs, and activities. This program is sponsored by Pure Land Learning College Association. Listeners will also be able to listen to the program via live streaming at http://www.102point7fm.com.au/

Past series are available to listen on our website www.interfaith-harmony.org.

In addition, we also maintained a cordial relationship with both our local television media – WIN TV and Channel 7.



Sophie Tetzlaff, a reporter from Channel 7 news, interviewing Venerable Master on his peace and harmony work in Toowoomba

Some examples of positive stories featured by our local print media in Toowoomba.



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Local News

SPEAKING UP: One of the guest panels included (from left) ABC Radio National producer and presenter Dr Rachael Kohn, Sophie Ryan and Reverend Dr Jonathan Inkpin.

Faiths unite to resolve crisis

By LAURA HUNT
laura.hunt@thechronicle.com.au

A MULTITUDE of faiths came together and discussed resolving crisis on the second day of the Interfaith Forum.

Co-ordinated by the Pure Land Learning College Association, hundreds gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral Centre to hear from speakers addressing the theme of Resolving Crisis through Religious Education and Co-operation.

St Ursula's College student Sophie Ryan received praise when she gave a youth's view.

Multifaith and Multicultural Centre co-ordinator Muhammed Hamiff said the forum promoted greater appreciation of the diversity in faiths.

"It has educated a lot of people of different faiths about the similarities between them.

"It's just one way of educating people and getting them involved while making them comfortable to speak up and interact," he said.

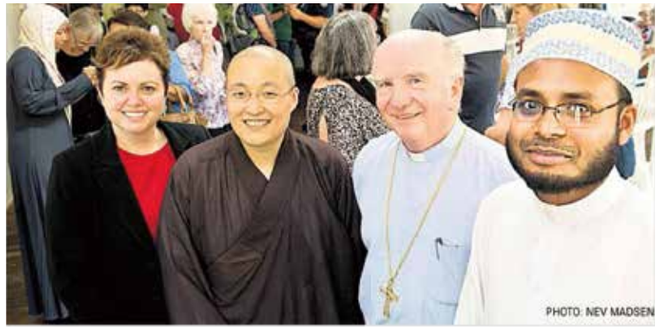
Religions represented included Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Taoism.

The forum finishes today with a candle lighting ceremony for International Day of Peace at St Luke's at 8am and then back at St Patrick's from 11am.

Watch the video at www.thechronicle.com.au

FAITH FORUM: Executive vice-president of the Pure Land Learning College Association Venerable Wu Shin with St Ursula's College student Sophie Ryan.
PICTURES: NEV MADSEN

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Local News


PHOTO: NEV MADSEN

GOODWILL: Community leaders rallied at the Garden City Mosque for a Friendship Gathering (from left) USQ vice-chancellor Jan Thomas, Venerable Wu Ping, Bishop Robert McGuckin and Imam Abdul Kader.

Compassion at core of all religions

Tara Miko
tara.miko@thechronicle.com.au

THE city's religious leaders have met at the first of three meetings organised in the wake of the Sydney siege on Monday to educate and help dispel fears in the community.

Imam Abdul Kader told the 100-strong crowd the deranged actions of the lone gunman in no way represented the Islamic faith, and called for the Toowoomba community to work together in unity and peace.

He said the terrorist attack in Pakistan overnight Tuesday which left 141 dead at the hands of Taliban terrorists also went against the Islamic religion.

"There is no room for them in these societies," he said.

"Those people don't represent us.

"We need the support from the broader community ... to stand together in solidarity and send a clear message they belong nowhere in a peaceful society."

Imam Kader was the sixth speaker at the Friendship Gathering at the Garden City Mosque, following an address from University of Southern Queensland vice-chancellor Jan Thomas.

Professor Thomas said USQ would continue its charter of multiculturalism and education.

Pureland Learning's Venerable Wu Ping said at the core of every religion was compassion, and the tragic events of this week had lacked that peaceful essence.

Bishop Robert McGuckin condemned the actions of the Sydney gunman and said his Christmas wish was for peace.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Hands-on workshop for future leaders

FOCUS ON PASSION, VISION AND SERVICE


WORKING HARD: Checking out the new video for the Youth Leadership Forum are (from left) Alex Cossu, Sophie Ryan, Meiling Chow and Brett Rangiira.
PHOTO: MEGAN MASTERS

PASSION, vision and service are all qualities people could identify in most leaders, so that's exactly what this year's Youth Leadership Conference facilitators will focus on.

Future Leaders Toowoomba and Pure Land Learning College Association have teamed up to put on a full day of workshops to have students thinking about what it takes to be a good leader and learning the skills to become one.

On the organising team are Future Leaders president Mark Cecil, St Ursula's College 2013 captain Sophie Ryan, Professor Peter Swannell, senior education officer Brett Rangiira and Pure Land's Meiling Chow, with Alex Cossu as MC.

They say this year's event will be a lot more hands-on and focussed than last year's, and Pure Land has agreed to fund the best workshopped idea on the day.

Facilitator Sophie Ryan said each speakers would offer a different perspective on what leadership was and how to become a good one.

"Peter and I have been working together and we have very different, but complementary, ideas on what passion is all about," she said.

"Peter is quite passionate about getting kids to realise there is support out there and helping them find it.

"I believe the same thing but in a slightly different way.

"I want them to believe that not only is there support out there, but that the biggest part of it is what they can find in themselves."

Prof Swannell may be the most senior member of the team but part of that is being able to have a bit of perspective on how things work out in the longer run.

The conference, designed for students in Years 10, 11 and 12, will be held at The Cathedral Centre on July 23.

He will focus on how people of all ages can and should be passionate, as well as encouraging ways to get people actually doing the things they talk about.

Vision facilitator Mark Cecil said vision was all about seeing the bigger picture and setting goals.

Meanwhile, Brett Rangiira has been preparing a session on service, which will include looking after yourself just as much as looking after the community.

He believes a good leader, through service, creates an environment in which people flourish.

The group is feeling more confident by the day that this year's conference will be a far more refined and interesting version of last year's, which was hailed a definite success by attendees.

The conference, designed for high school students in Years 10, 11 and 12, will be held at The Cathedral Centre, in Neil St, on July 23 from 8.30am–3pm.

For more information visit www.interfaith-harmony.org or phone Pure Land on 4659 8054.

Saturday 27 October 2012 | Week 1 | Issue 3 Telegraph 31

Feature story your weekend

Toowoomba the model for a world of peace and harmony

By Merryl Miller


Inside the Pureland Learning College. Photo: Nathan Thomas



MUHAMMED Haniff is a Muslim, who works in a Buddhist foundation of learning.

One of the central buildings in that foundation – at the Pureland Learning College in West Street –started life as a Presbyterian Church, and its original façade (and pipe organ) remains intact.

It is tangible evidence such as this that gives such strong credence to Pureland's multi-faith mission; a centre which embraces all religions as sources of wisdom and love.

"People sometimes think of religion as causing conflict, but the Bible, the Koran, the Sutra, the Torah – none of them preach conflict," the Venerable Wu Ping said.

"We must learn the teachings from all faiths, and love all people.

"It is simple – if we live together in harmony and learn the wisdom that comes from all faiths, then there is no conflict."

The Pureland Learning College, established in Toowoomba 11 years ago, is a lush and green oasis from the outside world.

No-one rushes, the cherubic Buddha statues invite you to rub their bald heads, and the sound of chanting fills the air.

People from all over the world come here to study, but plenty of local visitors attend the daily meditation sessions, classes, inter-faith forums, and friendship dinners.

It is easy to see why. The environment is hospitable, the pace is calming to the soul, and love is not just preached but practiced.

"It's all about teaching people to feel gratitude," Venerable Wu Ping said, pointing at the 20,000 names which line the walls of the Ancestor Memorial Hall.

"If you can feel gratitude for your ancestors, then you can feel gratitude for anyone.

"We must recognise the virtue and wisdom of our ancestors, because we get lost if we forget that. "Our roots are the meaning of life."

The Pureland Learning College represents life broken

Muhammed Haniff
Co-ordinator of the Centre

"Toowoomba has been receptive, and participation is growing,"

down from its most complex to its most simple and important. This is an embrace of all cultures, all faiths and all nationalities – acceptance and tolerance – at its very best.

And Toowoomba has certainly come on board to embrace the Pureland philosophy. "Toowoomba has been receptive, and participation is growing," Mr Haniff, co-ordinator of the Centre said.

"We see our community as one single family, and we want to create the spirit of neighbourhood."

Toowoomba was chosen by the Venerable Master Chin Kung as the site for the multi-faith, multi-cultural centre because of its distinct characteristics. With residents coming from many parts of the world, there was a variety of different customs and religious beliefs represented in the community.

As the Master once stated "Toowoomba is able to express its beauty in a multi-cultural setting just like a magnificent flower garden in which hundreds of different flowers blossom for the visitors to gaze on in wonder".

This support to the Toowoomba community has also been evident in the financial assistance offered by the Pureland Learning College.

"The College has invested quite significantly in the community over the past 11 years, with support to the Hospice, the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, PCYC, and flood appeals," Mr Haniff said.

"Our practice and belief is about sharing with those who need it more than we do, because it creates a better community."

So successful has the relationship between the College and the community been over the past decade, that plans are already well underway for Toowoomba to be presented to the United Nations as a model city of peace and harmony. The Venerable Master Chin Yung will travel to Sri Lanka next week with a delegation from the Pureland Learning College to meet with UNESCO ambassadors to further this goal.

Once achieved, Toowoomba will inspire and encourage people from around the world to live in peace and harmony. This could ultimately "transform the chaotic world by making it a peaceful place and restore the wounded earth back to a healthy planet".

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Local News

Delegates promote peace

City group heads to Sri Lanka


PEACE FORUM: Venerable Wu Ping of the Pureland Learning College will lead a delegation from Toowoomba to attend an Interfaith Peace Forum in Sri Lanka including (from left, standing) Tim Knox, Barry Sheehan, Scott McGrath, Syed Ghazaly, Regina Doh, Mary Lin, Ally Martell, Loughy You, (from left, seated) Sarwan Narayan, Kim Watson, Joanne Bray, Haniff Muhammed and Meiling Chow. Absent Dr Frank Hepple, Roberto Garcia, Venerable Wu Chin and Gurdip Singh.
PICTURE: BEV LACEY

A DELEGATION from Toowoomba will attend a three-day Interfaith Peace Forum in Colombo, Sri Lanka, next week.

The delegation will travel as special guests of president of the Pureland Learning College Venerable Master Chin Kung who will fly from Hong Kong to greet them in Colombo.

Muhammed Haniff of the Pureland Learning College said each delegate had a special role to perform during the forum.

"Delegates will be offering prayers or giving presentations. They will be participating in panel and group discussions and attending lectures each day," he said.

"Most importantly we hope they will bring back knowledge and ideas to share in Toowoomba."

The Chronicle social writer Ally Martell is looking forward to the five-day trip.

"The Pureland Learning College is working to guide Toowoomba on a journey of peace and harmony," she said.

"World peace begins within each of us at the community level and I will be speaking to the forum about the media's role in fostering peace and harmony."

Most importantly we hope they will bring back knowledge and ideas to share in Toowoomba.
— Mr Muhammed Haniff

Delegates will have the opportunity to meet the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is hosting a formal luncheon at his palace.

They will also meet Katalin Bogyay, president of the General Conference of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Other highlights of the trip will be tours of Colombo including Buddhist temples and schools.

● Ally will submit stories to The Chronicle from the Peace Forum in Sri Lanka.



32 Telegraph Saturday 08 December 2012 | Week 91 Issue

NEWS

Local youth brainstorm for a better tomorrow

By Sean Quinn

sean.quinn@toowoombatelegraph.com

IT was an afternoon of tomorrow's leaders brainstorming for ideas that could lead to Toowoomba becoming a hub of multiculturalism.

Around 30 youth and youth leaders aged from 15 upwards attended the youth forum last Saturday entitled "My City, My Dreams, My Voice!", and voiced their opinions on the important issues that face Toowoomba.

The theme question posed to the youth was "what does Toowoomba need to become a model of peace and harmony in the international community?"

Everyone was then split into groups to bounce ideas back and forth.

Those who attended the forum voiced several great ideas which potentially could make Toowoomba a better place to live.

Some of the ideas put forward at the meeting included hosting events that embrace multiculturalism, intensive teachings of different religions in schools to prevent cultural misunderstandings and better public transport.

President of Future Leaders Mark Cecil, 29, attended the forum to listen to what the community's youth had to say when it comes to making Toowoomba a better city.

"We wanted to hear what the youths' ideas were when it comes to improving our city," Mr Cecil said.

"The overall message that I picked up was awareness, there were some great ideas put forward about public transport and community events that should be promoted more."

He said the youth thought of ideas which if voiced at their schools would certainly promote change for the better.

"There were a few exchanges of ideas from kids in school which they will run internally," he said.

"I think it starts from the ground up, those guys could organise different forums and events at their schools which would in turn then affect the outside community."

It was also mentioned by chairperson of the forum, Ally Martell that ideas formed at the meeting would be submitted to a committee with a chance of prize money.

This means the ideas presented last Saturday could become a reality in the future, and real change would be made by Toowoomba's youth who attended.

Mr Cecil commented that seeing the youth being productive and coming up with ideas on how to make Toowoomba a better place gave him hope for the future.

"I think they voiced some great ideas and showed great initiative," Mr Cecil said.

"There was certainly promise that they were going to follow through with the ideas and ideals that they were talking about after the forum."

Some of those attending the Youth Forum discuss ideas.

Youth forum ideas

- Using YouTube as a way to promote peace and harmony.
- Collaborating and working with PCYC to promote greater youth participation.
- More Youth Forums and more group discussions.
- Create more opportunities for overseas exchange programs.
- Sports as a connector
- Harmony Sports Days. Playing sports from different cultures to promote integration and appreciation of the different cultures in Toowoomba.
- Upgrade Toowoomba's public transport system with quick and reliable shuttle buses.
- Turning Bell Street Mall into a multicultural hub by including shops from different nations and family friendly centres.



22 The Chronicle, Saturday, May 19, 2012 www.thechronicle.com.au

Local News

Toowoomba delegates head to Bangkok for religious event

Residents set to explore the power of faith

By MEGAN MASTERS

megan.masters@thechronicle.com.au

MANY churchgoers will know the incredible sense of unity that comes from dozens of people praying together, but a group of 28 Toowoomba residents will soon know the feeling of praying with 10,000 others.

Delegates from a wide range of Toowoomba faiths depart tomorrow for a three-day international interfaith summit in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Venerable Wu Ping, of the Buddhist Pure Land Learning College in West St, said praying would be one small part of the summit, with most time allotted to learning about other faiths.

"It's not just about worshipping together, but also about generating interfaith dialogue," she said.

"I think 10,000 people praying together will bring great peace and power, but it will be important to discuss how we can let this peace and harmony last forever."

Toowoomba Regional Council multicultural development officer Roberto Garcia said Toowoomba had a unique demographic including many migrants and refugees, and attending the summit was just one step on a path to a more tolerant community.

It's a sentiment reflected by the people at Pure Land who see Toowoomba as the perfect place to create a model city of peace and harmony.

FAITH CHALLENGE: Preparing to head off on the International Interfaith Summit are (front, from left) Jennifer Guo, Nura Behjat, the Venerable Wu Ping, Meiling Chow, (rear, from left) Cathay Kang, Barry Sheehan, Reverend Dorothy Woodside and Roberto Garcia. PICTURE: MEGAN MASTERS

It will be important to discuss how we can let this peace and harmony last forever

— The Venerable Wu Ping



30 The Chronicle, Saturday, February 9, 2013 www.thechronicle.com.au

Our Town

Multifaith meeting on Australia Day

Morning tea lifts spirits

THE weather didn't dampen Australia Day spirits at the Pure Land Learning College which hosted a multifaith morning tea.

Faith leaders joined in prayer, choirs and musical groups entertained and everyone had a go at the special Australia Day puzzle.

The Pure Land Learning College provides free lectures on spirituality every Saturday followed by a vegetarian meal.

For details visit www.interfaith-harmony.org

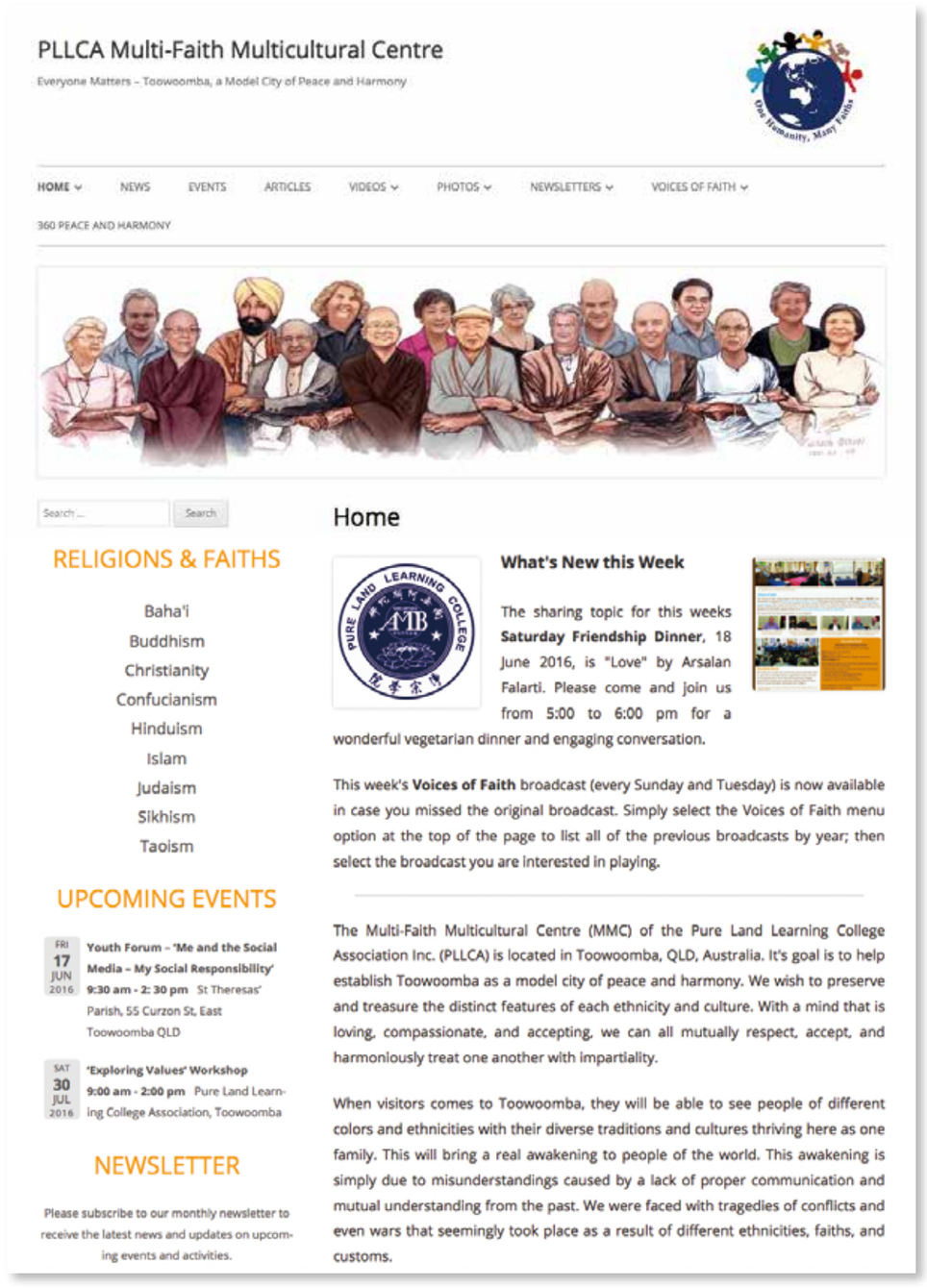
HAVE FAITH: Leading the prayers are (from left) Venerable Wu Sheng, John Walker, Taisoo Kim Watson, Sarwan Narayan, Syed Ghazaly, Shantelle Shore, Rev Dorothy Woodside, Ian Macfarlane, Rev Jonathan Inkpin, Dr Frank Hepple and Gwen Currie. Pictures: CONTRIBUTED

YAKKETY SAX: Entertaining the audience are (from left) Benjamin, Michael, John and Debbie Sheehan.

TRUE BLUE: Cutting the pavlova are (from left) Jo Mark, Linda Baker, Ian Macfarlane, Rev Peter Rama Rau, Venerable Wu Chyuan.

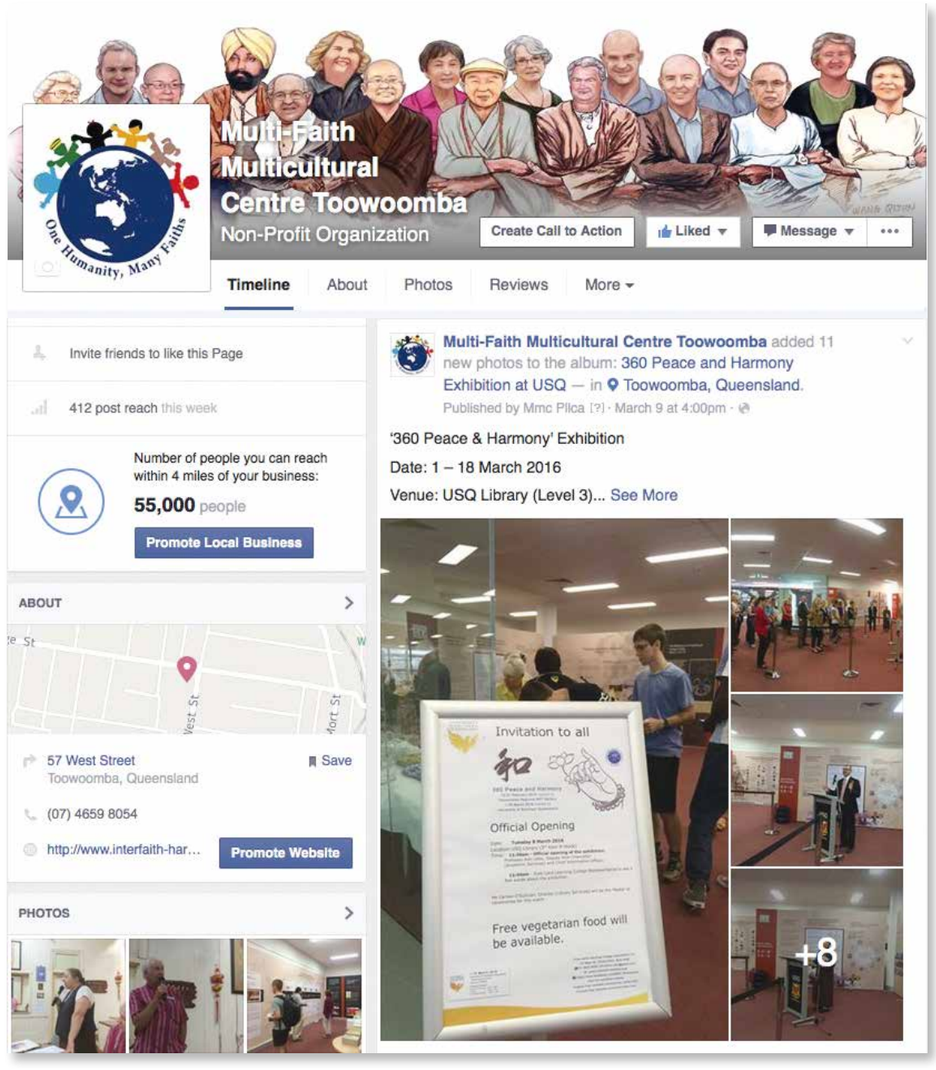
To keep the community updated of our activities, the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre publishes a monthly newsletter, which is also emailed to subscribers.

All past newsletters are available on our website at www.interfaith-harmony.org



A snapshot of our website: www.interfaith-harmony.org

The Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre also engages with the wider community both within and outside of Australia via our Facebook page, which is regularly updated with photos of past events. A snapshot of our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MMC. Toowoomba is as follows:



A snapshot of our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MMC. Toowoomba

“ Historically,
religion came first and science grew out of religion.
Science has never superseded religion,
and it is my expectation that it never will supersede it. ”

--Arnold J. Toynbee, Surviving the Future

FAITHS

Sustainable peace and harmony can only be built on the solid foundation of religious education. The word religion in Chinese is *zongjiao*. *Zong* means primary, important, and to be revered. *Jiao* means education, teaching, and transformation. Hence, when the Chinese put these two characters together, it means primary education, important teaching, and a transformation to be revered. There are five elements of a religious education: morality, virtue, causality, philosophy, and science.





Greater Appreciation of Diversity in Faiths and Beliefs Across Multicultural Communities – Everyone Matters, 19 – 20 September 2013



Forum 2014 - A Community Initiative, Building Bridges, Sharing Humanity: Everyone Matters, 10 October 2014





Forging a Common Humanity – A Civic Responsibility, 9-10 October 2015



Every faith is encouraged to introduce their teachings to the community, so as to bring about opportunities to discuss and understand each other's religion. Faith sharing helps to further facilitate and nurture better understanding of the diversity in faiths and beliefs.

All faiths are invited to share their commonalities and to serve the community regardless of different ethnicities. This helps to facilitate communication, eliminate prejudices, and promote religious harmony.

Since 2012, weekly faith dialogues have been held at the Pure Land Learning College Association with the aim to share with the local community the fundamentals and values that each religion teaches. It has progressed from a single faith sharing to a bilateral faith sharing, and subsequently to a trilateral faith sharing.



Walking Meditation led by Venerable Wu Chin and Venerable Kai An at the annual ecumenical evening at St Theresa's Parish held on 5 November 2015. These evenings are a chance for various religions, cultures, and people from all walks of life to come together as one and discuss interfaith dialogue and engagement.



CATHOLICISM



ANGLICANISM



BUDDHISM



HINDUISM



UNITARIAN



JUDAISM



QUAKER



BAHA'I



ISLAM



TAOISM



CHRISTADELPHIANS



SIKISM



HUMANIST



BUDDHISM AND ISLAM



CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

BILATERAL FAITH SHARING ON
INTERFAITH RELATIONS



Venerable Master joined faith and community leaders at The Parish of St. Luke to participate in peace prayers on 21 September 2014 at the International Day of Peace





Community Interfaith Dialogue (Level 1) Workshop, 25 February 2012



Community Interfaith Dialogue (Level 2) Workshop, 20-21 April 2012

Toowoomba Churches Together is an ecumenical group consisting of representatives from Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, and Uniting churches in Toowoomba.

Toowoomba Churches Together and the Pure Land Learning College Association have jointly organized an annual interfaith forum since 2014.





Peace Education Forum: Benefits of Interfaith Dialogue, 29 March 2014





Scriptures and Human Relations Symposium, 14 March 2015







Interfaith Forum: The Road Ahead from Ecumenism to Interfaith, 12 March 2016

The Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group (TIWG) was launched in 2015 in Toowoomba.



Its mission is as follows:

- To nourish understanding and cooperation among diverse religions and faiths, and be a visible example of acceptance and respect between people.
- To promote awareness of the tenets and beliefs of the diverse faiths in the Toowoomba region.
- To provide opportunities for the community to participate in interfaith and community education programs.
- To practice, by word and deed, the values of kindness, compassion, and respect for the common humanity of all.
- To work for peace, harmony, and goodwill between people of diverse beliefs.





Members of the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group with Venerable Master Chin Kung on 2 March 2016.



Education is of primary importance for self-cultivation to change one's destiny,
for managing a business and a family,
for building a country and guiding its people,
for creating a society that is courteous and righteous,
for bringing forth social stability and harmony,
for creating wealth and peace for the people, for establishing a glorious era marked by
lasting peace, and even for establishing the lands of Buddhas,
for the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Education is essential in building a country and in guiding its people.

Chin Kung

EDUCATION

Learning institutions have an obligation to provide a holistic education, which includes imparting values that help build good moral character. Being morally and spiritually strong will help students to be on top of the challenges of modern society.



Venerable Master Chin Kung in a dialogue with Vice Chancellor, Professor Jan Thomas, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ken Udas at The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) on 1 March 2016



Venerable Master speaking on 'Knowledge, Peace and Research: The Role of Contemporary Universities' at The University of Southern Queensland on 8 October 2014



Venerable Master presented on 'Education as a tool for attaining peace and happiness' at the USQ Salon on 15 March 2016, while Professor Jan Thomas presented on 'Commonwealth perspectives on higher education and civic capacity'





Mark Creedon, Principal of Darling Heights Primary School, sharing his school as a case study of what is achievable – a harmonious community where our diverse ethnic groups work cooperatively and in religious harmony through a common desire, providing the best for our children.



Address by Venerable Master at Darling Heights State School to 200 principals and teachers on the 'Social and Moral Responsibilities of an Educator' on 20 October 2014





Venerable Master in a dialogue with Kathy Bliss, Principal of Holy Name Primary School, and teachers on 13 October 2014

Every year, the Pure Land Learning College Association provides complimentary workshops, where we invite presenters to conduct workshops that empower local community members.



Effective Presentations Workshop, 15 and 16 February 2013





Conflict Resolution Workshop, 12, 13, and 14 August 2014





'Inclusive Diversity – Inclusive Society' Workshop, 8 October 2015

The '360 Peace and Harmony' exhibition promotes practical ways of achieving peace and harmony. It showcases the wisdom of ancient Chinese philosophers and the world's religions as being ever-relevant, and how such universal values and concepts can benefit our lives, as well as our families and communities today.

Compassion, education, kindness, religious acceptance, and mutual respect are explored through timeless Chinese literature, and through the multicultural and interfaith harmony work in Australia.



'360 Peace and Harmony' exhibition at The London Mall Galleries, 28 September – 3 October 2015



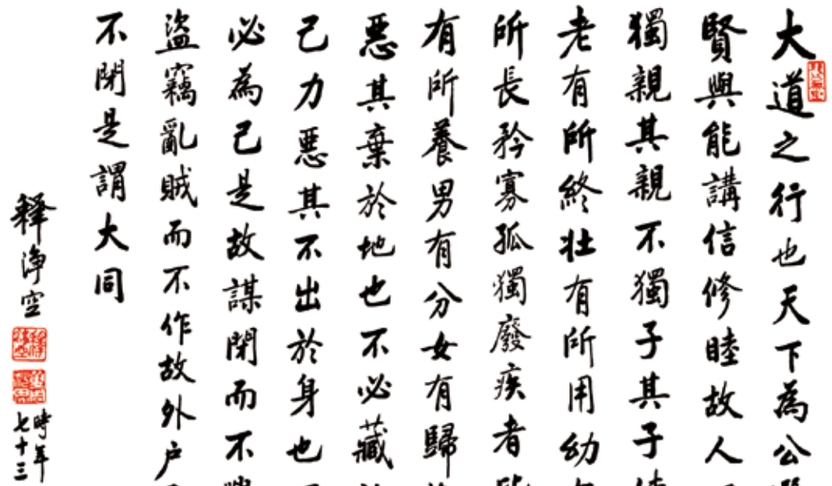


'360 Peace and Harmony' exhibition at The Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, 12-21 February 2016





'360 Peace and Harmony' exhibition at The University of Southern Queensland, 1-18 March 2016



Knowing the Way and following it properly, the world belongs to everyone.
A meritocracy of virtue and competence is practiced;
people are trustworthy and everyone can live in harmony with others.
People will thus not only respect and care about their own parents,
but also treat every elderly person the same way;
they will not only protect and teach their own children, but also do the same for others'.
Here comes a peaceful, enjoyable retirement for the elderly,
gainful employment for the abled, healthy growth for the young,
and sufficient support for those who are widowed or orphaned, diseased or disabled.
Men can fulfill their duties and women can have a stable family life.
Nothing is wasted while there is no need to hoard for selfishness.
People are ready to contribute whatever they have without any selfish intention.
Therefore, there are no plots, no thieves or criminals.
So there is no need for the residents to lock their doors protecting their property,
and that is what we call "a land of the great harmony".

Calligraphy by Venerable Master Chin Kung

COMMUNITY

To build a gracious, progressive, and resilient community that serves humanity, there must be continuous engagement through dialogues, activities, and social interactions.

Community outreach includes supporting the good work of local community groups and bringing the community together for a meal to exchange ideas and thoughts. This is also a foundation for building relationships and strengthening trust within the community, thereby promoting the values of caring and compassion for each other.

Networking is given great emphasis. Continuous effort is made to reach out to different community and faith groups of similar interests. An extension is the visit to regions outside Australia to learn and share programs. Informal, small groups chats over coffee are also organized, as this is effective in getting frank and objective views.





The Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba was launched in 2012 in Bangkok (left picture)
Faith and community representatives reading the common affirmation for peace and harmony.

Affirmation for Peace and Harmony
(Goodwill Committee Toowoomba)

We come from many backgrounds
& have journeyed many roads.
We give thanks for these good things of our past.
We rejoice in the first peoples of this land
and their continuing cultures.
We celebrate with all who have left other nations,
brought their learning and made a home in this place.
Just as the Bunya tree has given life for so many generations,
so may we offer shelter and sustenance
and share smiles of peace and harmony.

We bring many gifts and outlooks.
We give thanks for these good things of the present.
We rejoice in the strengths
& the diversity of our shared community.
We celebrate our many faiths & stories,
our business & our art.
Just as our environment gives delight to our Garden City,
so may we scatter seeds of understanding,
grow flowers of friendship, plant peace and harvest harmony.

We share many hopes and dreams.
We give thanks for these promises of the future
We rejoice in its possibilities
We re-commit ourselves to the common good.
Just as earlier diverse communities gathered for the great
Bunya festivals of the past, so may we walk together today
into a more joyful and reconciling world.
Honouring our elders and raising up children of hope,
may we be a model city of peace and harmony.

GWC
Goodwill Committee Toowoomba

One Humanity, Many Faiths

Goodwill Peace Prayer written by the Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba



Members of the Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba (GWC) in conversation with Mr Ian Stewart the Commissioner of Police Queensland



Toowoomba residents showing their support for multifaith and multicultural harmony at 'Walk as One' on 2 May 2015. The event was organized by the GWC and hosted by St Luke's Anglican Church. The peace mural in the background was a joint project between GWC, Toowoomba Youth Service, and the First Coat Festival



Group photo after the harmony lunch with faith leaders and the guest speaker, Assistant Commissioner, Tony Wright, on 19 March 2014



Bishop Cameron Venables (left) chairing the panel discussion at the Community Leadership Seminar on 'Strengthening Social Resilience Through Leadership' held on 11 December 2015





'Building Bridges across Diversity' workshop held on 19 February 2011







Bishop Robert McGuckin, Catholic Bishop of Toowoomba, celebrating Christmas with the community at the annual Christmas party at Pure Land Learning College Association




Welcoming the Chinese New Year with the lion dance and tossing the Yusheng at Pure Land Learning College Association




The opening ceremony and flag raising at the Australia Day Celebrations at Pure Land Learning College Association in 2015 and 2016.





Women's Forum – Women Family, Education held on 7 March 2015



Engagement with The Safer Toowoomba Partnership Committee on 2 October 2014



Culture is the soul of a nation;
Education brings life to its culture.

YOUTH

Our youth will be the ones to carry this peace agenda into the future. Their involvement will further strengthen the cause. As part of giving our youth the opportunity to understand the various faiths in Australia, the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre has organized complimentary Harmony Tours for primary school students since 2012. Students visit three places of worship on these days of learning, with a tour of the places of worship and a sharing of the faith traditions and customs.

These harmony tours aim to give students a broad overview of the cultural diversity of Australian society. Students get to experience first-hand the practices and beliefs of other faiths.

Check out the short clip at
http://on.fb.me/1OBLMPQ_



Learning about the mosque and
Islamic culture at the Kuraby Mosque







Students enjoying a vegetarian Langgar lunch at the Brisbane Sikh Temple



Asking questions about Buddhism at the Amitabha Buddhist Association



Youth from grades 9 through 12 went on a learning journey to explore other faith traditions and experience their hospitality. Exposure from this provided the youth with a greater appreciation of the diverse faiths and cultures in Toowoomba.



Group photo taken at Garden City Mosque



Experiencing walking meditation at Pure Land Learning College Association



Panel Discussion with Faith Leaders at St. Patrick's Cathedral (from right – Father Peter Dorfield, Bishop Cameron Venables, Venerable Wu Ping, and Muhammed Haniff)

In the spirit of building friendship among the youth, the Pure Land Learning College Association, Young Catholics, and the Islamic Interfaith and Multicultural Association took turns hosting youth gatherings, where young people were able to meet other youth from different faiths and enjoy each other's company.



Youth Harmony Dinner hosted by Pure Land Learning College Association on 20 March 2015



Tabletop Climb hosted by Young Catholics on 15 August 2015



Interfaith Youth Photo Challenge hosted by the Islamic Interfaith and Multicultural Association on 28 November 2015



Interfaith Soccer Challenge jointly organised by Young Catholics and the Islamic Interfaith and Multicultural Association on 25 March 2015

Youth forums have been organized annually since 2012, so attendees can share ideas and have a voice in contributing towards this peace journey. This helps to promote interactions and a deeper appreciation of the diverse cultures.



Youth Forum: My City, My Dream, My Voice, 1 December 2012





Peace Education UnConference: Developing a Culture of Peace through Education – A Youth Perspective, 17 September 2013





Youth participating at the Peace education Forum 'Building a Model City of Peace and Harmony – Building Bridges, Sharing Ideas' from 21-23 March 2013



The Youth Leadership Conference held on 23 July 2014 challenged the youths of Toowoomba to embrace their potential to make a difference in the lives of those around them and to embrace their ability to impact and change the world for the better.





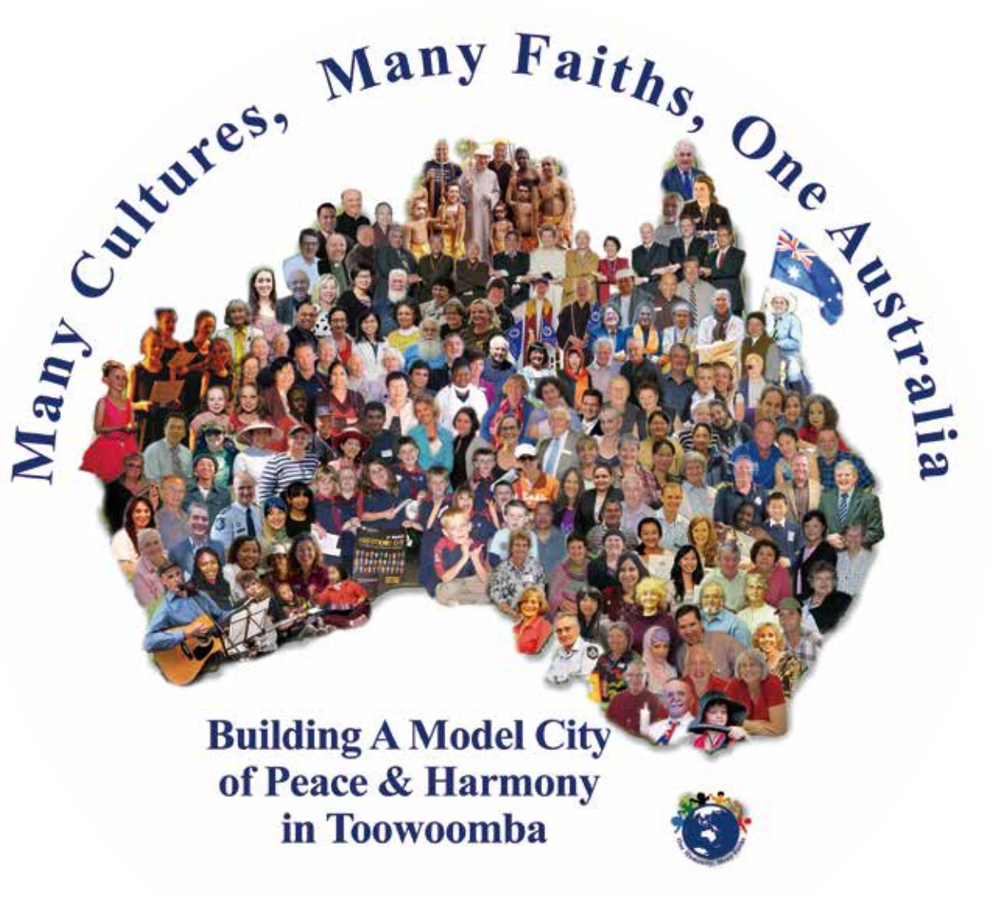
Youth from Toowoomba were encouraged to pen their aspiration on 'How I would like to make Toowoomba into an even better place?' at the 2015 Toowoomba Language and Cultural Festival

EPILOGUE

As an old proverb says, 'Actions speak louder than words'. The PLLCA Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre, together with strong support from faith and community leaders in Toowoomba, is offering strategies and a plan of action towards achieving the vision of establishing Toowoomba as a model city of peace and harmony.

To this aim, the formation of the Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba (GWC) and the Toowoomba Interfaith working Group (TIWG) is a major step in promoting awareness of the tenets and beliefs of the diverse religions and multicultural communities in Australia and around the world.

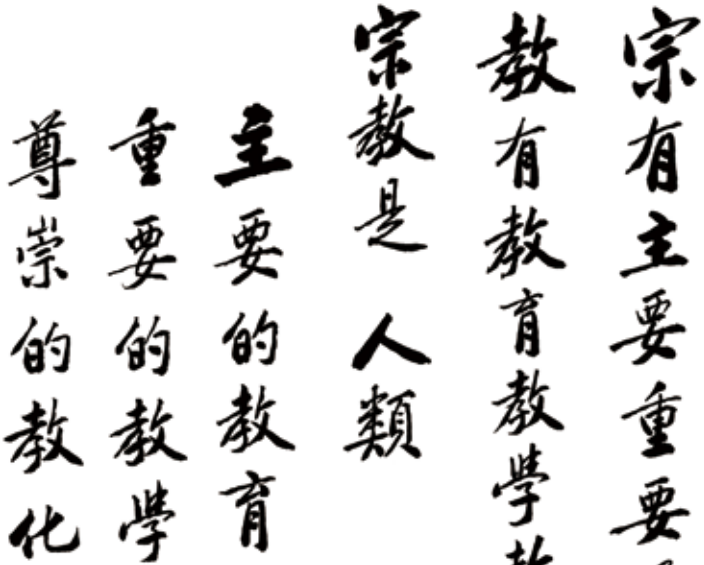
By being inclusive and by helping others with their good work, we can share our wisdom, mutually learn from each other, and become one big family. Making Toowoomba a model city of peace and harmony will require the leadership and guidance from faith and community leaders, as well as from every member of the Toowoomba community to realize peace and harmony. Let us use true actions, join hands together, and help make this vision a reality.



TO FIND OUT MORE . . .

We hope that Toowoomba's model of peace and harmony will inspire and encourage people around the world, and help to turn more and more cities around the world into model cities of peace and harmony.

To find out more, please visit our
Website: www.interfaith-harmony.org
Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MMC.Toowoomba, or contact us at
Postal Address: 57 West St, Toowoomba Queensland 4350, Australia
Email: mfmcc.pllc@gmail.com
Phone: +617 4659 8054



The Chinese word for "religion" is Zong Jiao (宗教) .
Zong (宗) means vital, important and revered.
Jiao (教) means education, teachings and civilisation.
When combined, Zong Jiao (宗教) means the vital education,
important teachings and revered transformation of humanity.