

Mission in a Multi-faith World

Theological and Missional questions

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This paper begins by entering into the work of Commission IV of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 and then goes on to sketch some of the questions and tasks that emerge 100 years later as we too ask what life in the presence of people of many faiths means for Christian believing, living, and mission.

I am grateful to those who invited me to this task for it forced me to read and reflect on reports and speeches arising from Commission IV of the Edinburgh conference. Till now the work of that commission has for me been little more than a footnote I had never explored beyond a casual glance. I suggest it's less important that we agree with what was said in 1910 than that we water seeds thoughtfully sown 100 years ago. This paper briefly refers to foundational and lasting insights that emerged from the work of Commission IV before identifying at greater length some of the theological and missional questions that belong to us as we respond in our time to similar questions but in a changed world. The task given to Commission IV was to enquire into what it might mean to carry the Gospel to all the non-Christian world. We may rephrase the task for our day but the underlying challenges and possibilities remain similar.

Insights from Edinburgh 1910

In many respects the planners of the Edinburgh Conference simply reflected the inherited Christian attitudes of their day in asking about the Christian attitude to those of other faiths but members of Commission IV pushed the boundaries and pointed to changes in attitude and identified questions that remain foundational into our time. The religions were seen as a hindrance on the way to a Christian victory in what they defined as "unoccupied lands." It was really the language of western imperialism but within a Bible wrapper. There was a feeling in the larger conference that life was running in the direction of the Christian church and that success for the church was assured if mission strategies could be improved. It was assumed that other religions were losing hold of the minds and hearts of their adherents, particularly among the educated classes, and that the opening years of the twentieth century was an opportune time for the church to go on the offensive in the battle for "unoccupied territory." The superiority of Christ as universal saviour was assumed as was the assumption that the church knew the mind of God in these matters.

Members of Commission IV allowed many of these inherited assumptions to be questioned and adopted an exploratory approach to the question assigned them. The methodology adopted by Commission IV was crucial. Nearly 200 missionaries with field experience working with adherents of other faiths wrote reports based on 11 carefully crafted questions. They wanted to draw on understandings of other faiths that had emerged from meetings, friendships, and living alongside those people whose faith was

under discussion. It is surely a foundational insight that actual meeting with, in depth listening to, and friendship in the presence of difference is a precondition for transformative interfaith encounter. It is at its heart a people to people, rather than a book-to-book exercise.

Nearly fifty years ago I studied comparative religion as part of a B.D degree. I read textbooks, written by Christian scholars but I read only a few brief snippets of holy books that nourished the living of those I studied. I never spoke with a Jew, Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim, nor did I visit a mosque, synagogue or temple. I studied disembodied facts. As life unfolded these defects were remedied but my initial introduction to the rich tapestry of human believing was hardly a roaring success. The library is an ideal place to reflect on and deepen questions and possibilities arising from actual meeting but there is no substitute for face-to-face, heart to heart engagement, friendship and mutual exploration of important issues.

Commission IV reflected and encouraged a strong consensus among respondents that other religions were to be treated with respect and sympathetic appreciation. Inherited ways of demonising or caricaturing others were to be replaced by friendship and respect, acknowledging the other as a fellow pilgrim in life's adventure. It was acknowledged that diversity is woven into the fabric of life. We may not always like diversity but that's the way life is, that's the way creation is put together and we need to adjust to it and learn to receive it as a gift. It's another foundational insight that endures.

Appreciation of legitimate diversity within life and among the religions led Commission IV to listen to and engage with each of the great families of faith in their own particular integrity. Blanket statements claiming to be true for all were largely set aside. G T Manley of the Church missionary Society, London, said: "we should build upon beliefs which are actually believed and not upon those that are only supposed to be believed."¹ Religion is embedded in the lives of real people and the generalisations of the textbooks are rarely replicated in their entirety in lived life. Reports of Commission IV, based on analyses distilled from missionary reports, covered African animism, Chinese religions, Japanese religions, the religions of India and Islam. They enquired in each case into the strengths of each faith and sought to identify points of contact with Christianity. The conviction, (or was it a hope?) was expressed that each of the non-Christian faith families was in crisis. As the twentieth century unfolded it became clear that any religious crisis surely included Christianity in its net. To see the other in his or her particularity remains a fundamental building block for inter-faith understanding.

It became clear to Commission IV participants, undoubtedly influenced by chairperson, Professor David Cairns, that the task they were attending to required more than tinkering with strategies. Once we begin to treat the neighbour who is different with respect and appreciative understanding we soon find ourselves engaged in thinking and discussion that challenges many of our own inherited values and previously unquestioned theological assumptions. Within the missionary responses are insistent questions: what does God have in mind in permitting the continuing presence of other religions and ways of interpreting and living life that differ from that which is given in Jesus Christ? Is there continuity or radical discontinuity between the other faiths and Christianity? Is truth to be found in other places? The questions persist into our time. The work of Commission IV became an invitation to deepening and challenging theological exploration. It's another foundational insight: engagement with those of other faiths is a doorway to demanding

and necessary theological exploration. More than that, it has become for many a doorway into needed Christian theological, spiritual and missional renewal.

A rough consensus emerged in the commission that Christianity was to be understood as the fulfilment of the questions and insights belonging to other faiths. These faiths, it was suggested, had a role to play in the purposes of God but it was a role that was fulfilled once they had prepared people for the hearing of the Gospel. Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil” was quoted. This evolutionary fulfilment model that was associated with the work of missionary theologian J N Farquhar was especially applied to the religions of India though it was recognised that Islam resisted any such characterisation. As a theory it sounded tidy but it was a view that bore no relationship to reality. Adherents of other inherited faiths are unlikely to reject ancestral wisdom for a message brought to their shore by strangers often accompanied by political ideologies and economic aspirations that serve only their own comfort.

The lasting impact of Commission IV, I suggest, is not its theological conclusions but that it identified the heart of its exercise as being essentially theological and it was willing to engage in the hard work involved in rethinking inherited and largely unexamined assumptions. Robert Speers, Vice-chair of Commission IV, having affirmed the centrality of Christ, went on to say in his final speech to the full conference: “No one of us believes we have the whole of Christian truth.... How is it possible for us in a small fragment of the long corporate experience of humanity, a few races in a mere generation of time, to claim that we have gathered all the truth of the inexhaustible religion into our own personal comprehension and experience...as we lay Christianity over against the non Christian religions...we discover as we do so, truths in Christianity which we had not discerned before, that we had not before imagined”. Such theological modesty and openness to further exploration is surely another foundational attitude in our encounter with those of other faiths. It’s a common experience among Christians engaged in thoughtful and empathetic relations with those of other faiths that their own faith and understanding of Christ is both challenged and deepened. Spiritual horizons are extended and appreciation of the mystery of God is expanded.

Commission IV recommended that seminaries and missionary training schools include appreciation of other faiths in their curriculum. As we mark the centennial of Edinburgh 1910, Claremont School of Theology in Southern California has announced it is entering into a partnership with a Muslim Centre and a Jewish Centre for graduate leadership education within their communities. Each of the three groups believes that preparation of religious leaders for their respective communities can no longer be done in isolation.

A surprising omission in the reports of Commission IV was any extended or sympathetic reference to Judaism. Passing references reflected the scholarly assumptions of the day that all that was treasured in Judaism had been superseded in the person and message of Jesus. A report on “The Jews” within Commission 1 of the Edinburgh conference concluded that “the Jews the world over are disintegrating and the younger generation is drifting away from the religion of the fathers.” In the light of this assessment evangelistic mission directed to the Jews was encouraged. There is a notable acknowledgement of Christian persecution of Jews and anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish prejudice in Europe and which is found “even among English and American Christians.” (even !!) Forty years later Christians would be jolted into a painful assessment of the way anti-Semitic

attitudes had been woven over the centuries into the very fabric of Christian believing and had become a building block of Western culture. The healing and painful task continues. It remains, as a foundational understanding, that encounter with the religiously different can be a painful experience as we confront the failings and betrayals of Christians now and in the past.

Theological and missional questions for today

The work of Commission IV was notable in its invitation to the Christian community to rethink and re-pray its attitude to the religions. However it cannot be claimed that it heralded a new era in Christian relationships with those of other faiths. Two World Wars and an economic depression meant that the church gave its energy and scholarly resources to other pressing tasks. A fear of syncretism meant that proclamation was favoured over dialogue. It was not till the 1960s that the discussion was reopened within the World Council of Churches following the merging of the Council with the International Missionary Council and even more notably by the Vatican II document *Nostrae Aetate* and the assertion that “the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions.” It would be interesting to traverse these years in the light of Commission IV’s invitations but there is no time to do so now. In the meantime the mixing of the religions throughout the world community and the continuing volatility within and between the faiths and the communities they influence has given a new urgency to the task allotted to Commission IV at Edinburgh.

Let’s build on some of the questions and insights of 1910, with a particular focus on theological questions for it was in the theological area that the work of Commission IV was most notable. However it not possible to provide more than a shorthand glance at matters crying out for extensive exploration. Since 1910 interest in inter-faith matters has expanded and there is now a plethora of books, conferences and programmes dedicated to inter-faith exploration. While this work is commonly associated with the liberal/progressive stream of church life, scholarly Christians of all theological and spiritual persuasions are involved. Catholic and Protestant, Orthodox and Pentecostal, Evangelical and Liberationist, all contribute to an ongoing and respectful discussion that though known in academic circles is, sadly, not well known in our congregations nor I fear by the bulk of our clergy and lay leaders. It’s unlikely and perhaps unnecessary that a single theological and missional consensus can be arrived at but it is important that we explore the issues and do it together. The issues I raise should, I suggest, be high on the agendas of ecumenical and denominational councils of New Zealand churches. Perhaps we can move denominational and congregational decision making bodies beyond the current preoccupation with money, management and marketing and instead find time to address these pressing theological and missional issues.

A starting point for disciplined inter-faith dialogue is the strong moral imperative to work for understanding and respect among the religions in what has become a dangerous, divided and often violent world. None of the great enduring religions of the world has clean hands, all have been and are, used to legitimate violence, division and a poisoning of the capacity of human communities to live in peace and justice. The renewal of the religions of our world, their return to the life giving impulses that brought them into being, is among the mammoth tasks we face. This is tragically true of Christianity as well as of other faiths. The words of Hans Kung, “There can be no peace among the nations

without peace among the religions” and “ there can be no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions” point us towards a key evolutionary task of our century.² While in some parts of the world dialogue is a near impossibility because of inherited and contemporary conflict here in New Zealand we have an opportunity to pioneer ways of being Christian that affirm that we and adherents of other faiths share in the same human family and are on a shared journey into truth greater than we know in our separateness. Involvement in disciplined inter-faith exploration and meeting takes us deep into the pain of our world and confronts us with our persistent and wilful unwillingness to translate religious conviction into action on behalf of humanity.

Involvement in transformative interfaith dialogue requires that we Christians learn how to live as servants within the human family, nurturing relationships, helping to break down barriers of distrust and seeking to create situations where understanding and new partnerships can grow. In other words penetrating more deeply into the pathways pioneered by Jesus. One of the helpful circumstances that enables the Christian church of the West to enter into this sort of transformative inter-faith partnership is that since 1910 they have lost their inherited political and social power. Canadian theologian, Douglas John Hall, suggests “we are now in the biblically normal situation that includes a plurality of religions and/or quasi religious alternatives.”³ If we could once regard ourselves as the sole bearers of all truth, and our task being to coerce others to belong to our way that time, is surely past. We know too much about the betrayals of the church, our ongoing denial of the pathways pioneered by Jesus, and are learning of deep wisdom found within other pathways. Face to face with the enormous human and environmental crises of our time we need all the spiritual wisdom we can find, within and beyond the Christian family. Giving up our imagined power and superior ways, overcoming the urge to make others into a mirror image of us is a first step on the road to living in continuity with Jesus who though in the form of God became a servant. If we are to be ministers of reconciliation then we need to locate ourselves at points of division and there is no sharper place of division than the chasms of misunderstanding that divide people of the faiths.

It follows from this that the church will need to recognise that, though not always easy to live with or appreciate, cultural, religious and ideological diversity is always present within the human family. One way of expressing this is to say that “God delights in diversity and seeks unity.” When the church looked at the world and the religions from a position of power and political superiority it was natural to view diversity as an enemy to be defeated and to be replaced by uniformity. Salvation has sometimes been understood as the imposition of religious and social uniformity. We are learning to live within cultural and religious diversity though some find the journey to be tough. Unity within the divine circle is never uniformity; it is nearer to what is described in other ecumenical contexts as “reconciled diversity.” The old missionary question “Are people of other faiths saved?” with its theologically imperialistic overtones is inappropriate. Baptist theologian Mark Heim is critical of those who claim that followers of other faiths may be “saved” as though they were followers of Jesus.⁴ Salvation in Jesus is what Christians seek. Buddhists seek Nirvana, Hindus seek pathways towards Moksa and Muslims seek the straight path that will conclude in life with God. The popular image, gifted to us by Gandhi, of us all climbing the same mountain by different routes is challenged by Heim’s observation that there may be many mountains and many routes. Each destination and

each route is to be valued without detracting from one's own primary commitment. We exist within deep and pervasive diversity.

A primary affirmation in the presence of other faiths is that Spirit is present in all of life and within the devotion and conviction of other faiths. No person or faith exists outside of divine Spirit. Along with this we can affirm that no faith fully captures the entirety of Divine truth. Appreciating the presence of Spirit in and through the religions represents a breakthrough in the search for a constructive way of valuing what is important to our dialogue partner. Begin with Jesus, understood as the only son of the Father, second person of the Trinity, through whom alone salvation is gifted to humanity, and dialogue is stillborn. Begin with Spirit and we can engage in a shared exploration of how the Divine presence is present within life and within religious forms and truths that shape us. The Spirit is the presence of God within all creation, luring creation towards fulfilment in relationship and is certainly not locked up in the Christian Church. To live from Spirit means to be open to surprise for Spirit blows where it will and is not confined by the traditions or formulations of theologians, leaders or systems. While in the Western tradition the Spirit has been associated with the continuing work of Christ within the Eastern tradition the Spirit is seen as being independent though yoked with the work of the Son. Working out the implications of this will involve the Western church in a reconsideration of the filioque, the Western, but not Eastern, view that the work of the Spirit is always yoked with that of the Son. We can affirm the presence of Spirit in other religions though they do not name or honour the Son.

The crunch question and theological heart of the matter for Christian theology is how we understand Jesus in the presence of other faiths. Jesus Christ is normative for Christian living and believing and to deny or obscure this distorts Christian identity and denies the possibility of honest dialogue. The reductionist path whereby Jesus is regarded as another prophet or holy man on a par with other holy men is not enough if we are to be true to the priority Christians give to Jesus as unique embodiment of the purposes of God within human history. A casual attitude to the treasures of Christianity is inappropriate in the presence of those of other faiths. Authentic dialogue arises from the meeting of our deepest convictions and values. It is not always easy to explain who Christ is for us and for the church for Christ is truth we dwell in rather than something that can be placed under a microscope or dissected like a dead body. The crunch question for us is whether the life and teaching of Jesus is unique to the extent that it displaces all other religious insight. What we mean by the uniqueness of Jesus in a world of many saviours and religious pioneers needs to be rethought and restated. We may want to affirm that Jesus belongs within an interconnected truth that includes other prophets and religious pioneers. While each religion may stand alone in its uniqueness the truth and life each cherishes is deepened and clarified in conversation. We can no longer simply parrot New Testament verses that no one comes to the Father but through Jesus, or that only in the name of Jesus can humans find fulfilment, for we know these statements need to be understood against the background of first century debates between rabbinic Judaism and the emerging Jesus movement, part of the polemic surrounding arguments as to whether in Jesus a new way of belonging to the People of God was born or whether the new movement was a heretical deviation from the way of Moses. They have no reference to contemporary or past engagement with the great faiths of the world. While we may say

that Jesus was fully responsive to Divine reality we need not claim that Jesus represents the totality of Divine or human possibility. It is possible to affirm the uniqueness of Jesus without discounting the significance of other prophets as bearers of Divine truth within their cultural and historical setting. While we may regard Jesus, in his life and message, as normative, this need not exclude other messengers. If we regard Jesus as the enfleshment of the Logos this does not preclude other expressions of Logos witnessed to in other religions, holy books, events or prophets. The issues are heady and demanding. At the root of it is the search for legitimate ways of affirming Jesus the Christ, understood within the Christian community as God's decisive word to humanity, without denying the significance and decisiveness of other Divine eruptions into human history. There will be no easy consensus as the church addresses the question. Certainly we are unwise to claim our knowledge of Christ to be complete. Christian life is an ongoing exploration into Christ and the way of life embodied in Jesus. In interfaith encounter we are frequently drawn into deeper understandings of our own confession of Christ. Along the way we need to remind ourselves that as Christians we engage in interfaith encounter and dialogue not in spite of Jesus but because of Jesus. It is his example that leads us to others, encourages us to be hospitable and respectful and to share in the breaking down of walls of mistrust and inherited division.

What of the church's evangelistic task in the presence of those of other faiths? Does dialogue displace evangelism? Evangelism, the sharing, through word and deed, of good news made known in Jesus Christ, certainly belongs near to the heart of Christian being. But we must be sure that it is good news arising from the way pioneered by Jesus and is not an extension of our imperialistic ambitions. Inter-faith friendships help keep us honest in our dealings with those of other faiths. We are invited to a more thoughtful, non-coercive, dialogical relationship with those around us and to whom we may wish to commend Christ as way, truth and life. Dialogue (listening, learning, sharing) and evangelism (living, commending and receiving Christ) belong together as two facets of Christian believing and living. We have a gift to offer to those of other faiths and we need not be diffident in our confession that the world needs Jesus. His way of generosity, peacemaking, hospitality, forgiveness, love, sharing with the poor, and devotion to the unifying purposes of God needs to be woven into the fabric of our societies and our individual lives. The Jesus we commend to those of other faiths is not the Jesus of creeds, liturgical formulation or christianised piety but the Jesus who invited people to live within the love of God in ways that flow over into a renewed and renewing society. We can think of the religions as already agents of God's Kingdom, even though their performance may be as spotty as that of the church. We can and should invite them to fold Jesus into their way of being human, even as we endeavour to fold the way of Jesus into the life of the church. It is more important that adherents of other faiths become more dedicated servants of the Kingdom of God, embracing Jesus' vision for society into their way of life, than that they become members of the church. The Kingdom of God is served by all who, motivated by the deepest spiritual wisdom available to them, work for liberation, justice, peace and harmony in the human family. Paul Knitter suggests, "A missionary who has no baptisms to report, but who has helped Hindus, Buddhists and Christians to live together lovingly and justly is a successful disciple of Christ; a missionary who has filled the church with converts without seeking to change a society that condones dowry deaths or bonded labour is a failure."⁵ Our goal should be to help

adherents of other faiths to live from the deepest, most humane, peacemaking, neighbour-loving and justice-seeking heart of their religion and we should do the same. Awareness of the vision from which Jesus lived enhances the search for these depths. In 2000 the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia declared that engagement in Christian mission includes the building of neighbourly relations with people of other faiths. It is the minimum we can say and do. What does it mean to be a neighbour in the spirit and pathway of Jesus? What is hospitality within the love of God?

We should not underestimate the radical shift in Christian consciousness that is required if the Christian community is to respond to the challenge of being followers of Christ in neighbourhoods, nations and a world of many strongly held and enduring faiths. Too much of the church's theology, education and strategy has contributed to human division sometimes in the name of what is best described as a Western tribal god. The change required is essentially a matter of spirituality. Love of God, present in Jesus and active in all religions and in every part of creation is invitation to a form of spirituality that prizes friendship, shared exploration of important matters, hospitality and a quietly generous spirit.⁶ The essence of life with those with whom one differs is friendship in the presence of difference. As Christians we are not good at this, witness for instance how Christians treat one another in the presence of divisive issues. Somewhere along the way the churches became captured by societal norms promoting the eradication, marginalisation or coercive conversion of those who believe and live differently. Though we might identify the boundaries that define our truth, it may be that God paints on a larger canvas and incorporates more variety into the Divine purpose than we have yet imagined. Humility before the wisdom others inhabit and before the mystery of God is always appropriate. Patience is essential, trusting that God can and will use our fragile, even tentative and inadequate efforts, in the building of the world. We cannot envisage what the future holds for the religious or social life of the human family but we can do what we need to do in the spirit of Jesus and in the service of humanity.

In presenting the report of Commission IV in 1910 Prof Cairns, referring to the perspectives emerging from analysis of the questionnaire responses stated: "Does the evidence not disclose that we are face to face today with a new and formidable situation which is too great for our traditional thoughts of God? As we read these reports we seem to be looking into the great workshop of history. We discern the forces at work, which make nations and make religions. We see the forming of a new world. Inevitably the question arises, whether the church has within itself the forces to meet this great emergency." In answering his own question Cairns goes deeper in search of an appropriate response: "Do we not need the broadening and deepening of all our conceptions of the living God, the deepening and liberating of all our thoughts of what he has done for us in Christ, of what by his Providence and Spirit he is ready to do for us in this day of destiny and trial...this can only mean a new discovery of God in Christ."⁷

End notes

¹ *The Missionary Message, World Missionary Conference, Vol IV*, Report of Commission IV, The Missionary message in relation to Non-Christian religions: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910, p 316.

² See Hans Kung and Karl-Joseph Kuschel, *A Global Ethic, The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, SCM 1993.

³ D J Hall, "Confessing Christ in the religiously Pluralist Context", in Brueggemann and Stroup (eds), *Many Voices, One God*, Westminster John Knox, 1998, p 65

⁴ Mark Heim, "*Salvations, truth and Difference in Religion*", Orbis 2004 and "*The Depth of the Riches, A trinitarian Theology of religious ends*", Eerdmans, 2001. Heim fears that most pluralist or inclusivist approaches are forms of disguised Christian imperialism. John Cobb represents a similar view and affirmation of radical diversity at the heart of the religious quest. See in particular, John B Cobb Jr, "*Transforming Christianity and the World, A Way beyond Absolutism and Relativism*", Orbis, 1999. See also the work of comparative theologians such as Francis X Clooney, (e.g. *Hindu Wisdom for all God's Children*, Orbis, 1998) and James L Fredericks (e.g. *Faith among Faiths*, Paulist, 1999) who claim we should give up the attempt to develop a universal theology of religions and instead live in continuing dialogue with those who in their difference throw light upon our believing. The best way into the different understandings of Christian theology within inter-faith encounter is Paul F Knitter, *Theologies of Religion*, Orbis 2002. Chapter 11, "Real differences make for real dialogue" is a critical introduction to the views of Heim, Clooney and Fredericks.

⁵ Paul Knitter, "*Jesus and the Other Names*," Orbis 1996, p 121.

⁶ I have said nothing of the enrichment of Christian spirituality that has come to many through participation in meditative exercises owing their origin to Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism or the Jewish mystical tradition.

⁷ *Missionary message vol IV*, p 297.

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John B Cobb Jr. *Transforming Christianity and the World, a Way beyond Absolutism and Relativism*, Orbis 1999.

Catherine Cornille, *The Impossibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, Herder and Herder, 2008. Explores the attitudes required if interfaith dialogue is to be fruitful.

Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, Orbis 2000. Critical of Pluralist approaches though sympathetic to the question D'Costa develops an explicitly trinitarian approach.

Diana L Eck, *Encountering God, A Spiritual journey from Bozeman to Benares*; Beacon 1993. Both an introduction to Hinduism and an account of the experiences of a leader of interfaith reflection in the USA.

Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, Orbis, 2002. This magnificent introduction to some of the best thinking in the area is the place to begin.

Paul Knitter (ed), *The Myth of Religious Superiority. Multifaith explorations of Religious Pluralism*, Orbis 2005: Essays from Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives.

Paul Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names, Christian mission and Global responsibility*, Orbis 1996.

Paul Knitter, *Without Buddha I could not be a Christian*, One World 2009. In 'crossing over' into the Buddhist way Knitter returns to the Christian circle with deepened understanding of life and of the Christian way. A classic.

Gerald R McDermott, *Can Evangelicals learn from World religions?* IVP, 2000. See also *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Inaugural issue, Winter 2010, available on the internet. The journal intends "to create space for Evangelical scholars and practitioners to dialogue about the dynamics, challenges, practices and theology surrounding interfaith work while remaining faithful to the gospel of Jesus and His mission for the church."

Keith Rowe, *Living With the Neighbour who is Different, Christian faith in a Multi Religious World*, Uniting Church Press, 2000. A brief raising of the key questions and possibilities in the development of a Christian theology of religions.

Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse, Towards a Pneumatological Theology of religions*, Baker Academic 2003. Yong is a younger Pentecostal scholar.

Among the many books that explore differing approaches to major issues are two that should not be missed:

Daniel L Smith-Christopher (ed): *Subverting Hatred, The Challenge of Non-violence in Religious Traditions*, Boston Research Centre for the 21st Century, 1998. Essays from Jain, Buddhist, Confucian and Daoist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Christian perspectives.

Paul Knitter, and Chandra Muzaffar (eds): *Subverting Greed, religious Perspectives on the Global Economy*. Orbis, 2002. Similar in format to the above.