

SESSIONS RELATED TO THE SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN STUDIES AT THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Toronto, November 1-7, 2018

SCHOLAR/PRACTITIONERS OR PRACTITIONER- SCHOLARS?

Joel Daniels, Guttorm Gunderson, Leo Lefebure, Ben Van
Overmeire, Judith Simmer-Brown

The academic study of religions is a strange field. As Jeffrey Kripal, among others, has pointed out, many of us have a double identity. Different perhaps than historians or literary critics, as practitioners many of us are part of the very phenomena that in our scholarship we try to explain. This puts us in an interesting and--we argue—productive position to question the stance of empirical objectivity and distance that some other fields in the humanities and natural sciences try to imitate. This panel attempts to explore that position for Buddhism and Christianity. Our presenters share their experiences “crossing” (if it can be called that) from scholar to practitioner and vice-versa. How academic perspectives enhance one’s experience as a practitioner? Vice-versa, how does a practitioner perspective alter one’s scholarship? How do both these perspectives affect our teaching?

MULTIPLE RELIGIOUS BELONGING: PROMISES AND PERILS

Ruben L.F. Habito, Kristin Johnston Largen, Eleanor Ponteriero,
Jonathan Seitz

This session is a panel by practitioners who either identify with more than one religious tradition, are scholars of the phenomenon of multiple religious belonging, or both. Most panelists identify as Buddhist-Christian. They will share their personal as well as academic perspectives. Far from the "scandal" that some people think it to be, practicing in more than one tradition not only offers many modern people rich opportunities for spiritual growth but also has occurred in many cultures for centuries. Presenters will speak directly and intimately about the challenges and opportunities of sincerely engaging in more than one tradition.

THE PLANETARY ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS THROUGH BUDDHIST AND CHRISTIAN EYES: A CONVERSATION

Joel Daniels, Theodore Dedon, Nan Kathy Lin, Teng-Kuan Ng,
Karen Sherlock

In the spirit of Buddhist-Christian dialogue, this panel brings together five voices to discuss the tremendous challenge of the ecological crisis. In an attempt to contribute to the Parliament's 1993 Global Ethic, we will discuss the inter-connected issues of economics, media, population, technology, and models of decision-making from Buddhist and Christian perspectives. The conversation will specifically address the challenges of

communication and dialogue around the problems of ecological care and responsibility for the future.

DIVINITY WITH RESPECT TO LOVE IN CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

Sak Dhammadipa, Leo Lefebure, Matthew Regan, Wil Tyrrell

Buddhism and Christianity have a sharp focus on the teleological imperative of human existence. In Christianity a *process of spiritual growth* and in Buddhism *a suitable path for general contemplation* propose pragmatic methods for reaching the *telos* of final union with God in Christianity and for purifying the consciousness in Buddhism. In this dialogue, we propose a framework by which Christians and Buddhists can explore and learn from each other's respective paths to spiritual perfection without compromising the very different truth claims at the heart of Buddhism and Christianity.

EXAMINING THE DEEP ROOTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: TOWARD A SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY

Dharma Master Hsin Tao, Maria Reis Habito, Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Ruben L.F. Habito

Spiritual Ecology is a developing field responding to the ecological crisis based on spiritual awareness. This panel will look into the deep roots of the ecological crisis, reexamining attitudes and world

views shaped by our religious traditions that have contributed to the present crisis of our Mother Earth. It will explore resources from our spiritual traditions to find new ways of relating to the Earth, both as individuals and in community. A project in Myanmar initiated by Dharma Master Hsin Tao will be highlighted as a concrete way of addressing these issues and finding new strategies towards saving the Earth.

CULTIVATING INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING: THREE UNIVERSITY CASE STUDIES

Judith Simmer-Brown, Ruben L.F. Habito, Leo Lefebure, Students from Georgetown University, Naropa University, and Southern Methodist University

Essential to any global ethic is interfaith understanding. In university and theological school settings, a variety of approaches are employed to engender understanding of religious diversity and dialogue, each with their own emphasis and pedagogies. In this cross-university panel, we will explore how three religiously affiliated universities—Jesuit, Protestant, and Buddhist—engender interfaith understanding. We will explore interfaith theology, social justice, dialogue, and contemplative practice, with interactive examples. Presenters will be graduate students from Southern Methodist, Georgetown, and Naropa Universities.