

## Robinsons on Parallel Religious Tolerance—A Necessary Challenge

While studying religious issues in counseling at the International Adlerian Summer Institute, we counselors, under the tutelage of Richard Watts, Ph. D., took a look at our own religious beliefs in relation to our counseling practices. We students were reminded that to put down the beliefs of others because they think their faith is “correct” or “makes sense” is not appropriate.

Each of us believes that the faith we have accepted and believe in makes the most sense in our lives and our experience. Our traditions, culture and individual views of life help us understand others, the world, and ourselves. Often we are products of our parents’ upbringing and examples (religious or non, examples of integrity or not).

But what about the religions that are different from our own? Granted, there are significant differences among the major world religions (different views about God; sacred writings, life after death). However, there are many similarities.

Take The Golden Rule, for example, which is the value that maintains that each individual has a right to just treatment and a responsibility to see that others have the same right.

Let’s look at what the major religions of the world state about THE GOLDEN RULE that many of us in the West know and live by:

- **Buddhism**: “Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.” The Buddha
- **Christianity**: “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.” Jesus of Nazareth

- **Confucianism**: “Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.” Confucius
- **Hinduism**: “This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain to you.” Mahabharate 5.1517
- **Islam**: “Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.” Muhammad
- **Judaism**: What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole *Torah*; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.” Hillel

Looking for the similarities in all faiths, religions and beliefs moves us toward world peace. Many have said that the religions of the world are the key to a peaceful and just society.

At my church, Trenholm Road United Methodist, in Columbia, my Sunday School Class has been studying the taped series, THINKING THE QUESTION. In our study, we discovered that all religions agree on three main tenants:

- Hospitality,
- Generosity, and
- not seeking vengeance

In September of 1993 in Chicago, the Parliament of the World’s Religions met and found a set of core values in the teachings of the major religions of the world. They formed the basis of a GLOBAL ETHIC—truth that is already known, but yet to be lived in heart and action. Here’s what they discovered that the major religions of the world share in common:

1. We must treat others as we wish others to treat us. Every person is to be treated humanely. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past, not enslaved by memories of hate.
2. We take individual responsibility for all we do. All our decisions, actions, and failures to act have consequences.
3. We have respect for the community of living beings: people, animals, plants and for the preservation of Earth, the air water and soil.
4. We consider humankind to be our family. We must strive to be kind and generous. No person should ever be considered or treated as a second-class citizen or exploited in any way. There should be an equal partnership between men and women.
5. We commit ourselves to a culture of non-violence, respect, justice and peace. We shall not oppress, injure, torture, or kill other human beings, forsaking violence as a means of settling differences.
6. We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing fairly with all, and avoiding prejudice and hatred. We must not steal.
7. We pledge to increase our awareness of a better world by disciplining our minds, by mediation, by prayers, or by positive thinking.

These religious leaders share a vision of peoples living peacefully together. Communities of faith are responsible for showing the world these ethical standards in word and deed. Wow! This message is for all of us, men, women and children of good will, religious or non-religious.

Ideas for this ROP were found in the classes of Richard E. Watts, Ph. D. at ICASSI (International Adlerian Summer School Institute), 2011.

The World's wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World Religions by P. Novak, 1994.

Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, The Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993, Chicago, IL.