



# Interfaith Church News

November 2012 – Vol.1 Issue 1

ABN: 58 508 667 719

A Registered Charitable Institution

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## The first issue

I know this has been a long time coming. Sometimes the world does not operate exactly how we wish it to, I have no doubt we are all aware of that fact.

For those that do not know me personally, I am the driving force behind the Interfaith Church. I have been working as an adult educator at TAFE for around five years, which pays almost all the bills for the Church and keeps me fed and clothed.

As the Church does not yet manage to pay its own bills, unfortunately it must sometimes take a back seat to my continuing studies and employment as an educator. We all need to prioritise our time, I am no exception.

In "[A Theory of Human Motivation](#)", Psychologist Abraham Maslow first introduced his concept of a [Hierarchy of Needs](#). While the original paper was less refined than the current model, it highlights the issue many of us have in achieving our goals and the difficulties I have had in running the Church and producing this newsletter.



Maslow posited that our needs can be divided into basic or deficiency needs (physiological, safety, love, esteem) and growth needs (cognitive, aesthetics, self-actualization). One must satisfy lower level basic needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. This is well worth looking into for anyone who is having difficulties in their life, especially at the more basic levels of food and shelter. It is equally beneficial to those that help people in need. It won't put food on the table, but it will assist in providing a basic understanding of what we need to survive and to thrive. [This video](#) looks at the ideas that originated with Maslow and [this one](#) looks at each level of the hierarchy of needs.

This year I have had some back issues. It attacked my hierarchy of needs at a basic level and meant I could not work for most of the year. While this may seem like a holiday, anyone who has been home for an extended period of chronic back pain can tell you it doesn't free up very much brain space. Thankfully most of the pain has now subsided and I returned to work last week rectifying some of my foundational requirements (income, job security, self-esteem).

I am back on deck, which is not to say I have a plethora of resources, but I have started on the newsletter and hope to have more brain space for things relating to the Church. I am hoping to complete my degree in semester one, 2013 which will provide even more time and a pay rise. This may be enough to reinvigorate me, to get the ideas flowing again, to get the [Interfaith College](#) up and running, to serve the community more. Much of this could also be achieved if I had a little help.

If you want to get involved or have ideas for the Church that you are willing to see enacted, please contact me by phone or email using the contact details at the top of this newsletter.



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## What is the Interfaith Church?

The Interfaith Church started out as a collection of concepts – If God created the world, and there are many different myths which name a creator God, mustn't each God be the same deity as seen through the different cultural understandings? Could all Gods be the same thing through the eyes of different peoples? Do we anthropomorphise God so we can better understand a concept or being beyond our current cognitive capacity? If we cannot completely understand God maybe we each see God as clearly as we can? Could we all be equally wrong about God, and equally right? Could the scientific ideal known as the big bang and the creation stories of religion be different versions of the same story? – I say the answer to all of these questions is a resounding YES!

If the Interfaith Church could be described in a word I would have to say it is evolving, give me another word and I will add accepting. It should not be the applied ideas of one man or even the combined thoughts of a few people, it should become the combined thoughts of all people. It should become a way toward peace, toward understanding each other within our own beliefs.

## Tolerance or Acceptance?

It has been a long standing statement of interfaith groups – we promote religious tolerance. I hope this statement will never grace any canon, mission statement or ideal of the Interfaith Church.

Tolerance indicates our ability to endure something we do not like or do not agree with. Take a moment to consider how you feel about someone you tolerate, a colleague or a neighbour maybe. How do you really see them? If you could remove them from your life, would you? I do not believe this is how religions should view each other, it is not a way to obtain peace so much as a way to curtail war, and as we have seen, it is often only a temporary measure.

Acceptance is much harder, especially for a people who traditionally fear the things we do not understand. It is one of the pillars of this church, written into the canons. This does not mean we need to accept everything so much as it means we should accept their right to see things differently to us. As an example, I can accept the first three Christian commandments were used to ensure a unity of people, to build a community based on a religion that gave us many of the benefits of the modern society we live in. I can accept that many Australians believe them, but I do not need to accept them into my personal ethos.

The best way to achieve acceptance is to seek understanding. In this example I have sought understanding of the reasons behind these commandments, this has driven my acceptance of those beliefs in others. I charge you to seek understanding; learn to understand your fellow man, how they think, what they think and the history of those beliefs. Promote understanding in others, help them to understand your beliefs. If you can do this you will become more accepting and the people around you will learn to accept you.



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## An Interfaith Scripture

One of the great benefits that most organised religion has over the Interfaith Church is their scripture; the literal interpretation of them is also one of the greatest disadvantages. Prior to the First Council of Nicaea, there were two main strains of Christian philosophy – the Literalists who believed in the written word as literal retellings of stories that actually occurred; and the Gnostics who believed that these stories were myths used to indicate important lessons and ideas through story, allegory, parable and the bardic tradition often attributed to many pre-Christian beliefs.

A rite of passage for many gnostic Christians was to create their own scripture, their own stories and myths in written form which demonstrated their personal grasp on the physical and spiritual world of man. Although I do not consider myself a Gnostic Christian, I am currently going through the same process. I have started writing what may become a new book, hopefully worthy of publishing. It will outline ideas that examine many of the harder questions that modern man asks himself, like creation vs evolution and is the Bible more correct than the Qur'an.

Here is an early version of one part of this book. I will try to add a bit into future newsletters.

### Genesis

Creationists are correct, so are those that believe in the big bang. Neither view of the beginning is completely correct, but neither is wrong either.

In the beginning there was something that man cannot seek to understand at this time. Some may call this the singularity, some may call this the body of God, both are correct.

Over a period of what we call time, it expanded. This involved a great burst of energy in the form of sound and light, but as there were no witnesses this is unimportant, as is the time it took to come about for there was no measurement of sound, light or time when this occurred.

The energy and matter that existed then is what created all that is now and remains foundational to its creation.

What was, expanded. The spaces in between its parts became greater and with the addition of these spaces it became more than it once was. The spaces became part of the universe and part of God.

In time, some parts moved further apart and some moved closer again to form the stars. The stars formed into groups and became galaxies. Where there was still a lot of matter around some stars there formed planets and where there was a lot of matter around the planets there formed moons.

The design was intelligent in that it required a set of rules, what have become known by man as natural laws, to form. These rules were within the makeup of the singularity that

existed before the expansion, within God and are foundational to the creation of everything.

On some planets there existed the possibility for life as we know it. They were very far apart but on at least one of them, life formed. Over a period of time life evolved and eventually became aware of itself. It changed and adapted to its environment and became more aware. This was a very long process as we measure time today but the eventual result on Earth saw modern humans as the dominant species, capable of independent thought.

Humans are not the only species on the planet, but they are the only species capable of destroying it or repairing it. It is because of this that we should consider ourselves the stewards of all life and all resources here.

Until such time as we learn to move amongst the stars, if we shall ever do this, to survive we must be clever and manage all that we have access to. If we make poor choices, we will destroy our home. If we make good choices, we may one day expand beyond our current restrictions.

Only through good stewardship of the Earth and through discovery in the sciences can we survive. This is the only path to our continued existence for if we do not do both, our finite resources will be exhausted and we will die. Life on earth will continue, but we shall not.

It is for this reason that many of the religious texts of man teach stewardship of the Earth, suggest we continue to advance our knowledge and tell us to take responsibility for our actions and words.



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## Aid Needed

While you might feel the idea of an Interfaith Church is a good idea, it won't run itself. I need help, and not only with the mundane things, I also need help with the spiritual and educational sides of things. Funds would be nice too, but I am sure they will come in time.

At this stage we have a few members, but we would like more. With greater numbers our voices will be better heard, the ideals of acceptance and non-discrimination will spread. Minds will be changed and hopefully we can encourage a greater peace in Australia that may one day spread to the world.

The Church website is up and running, and I'm fairly happy with it but it could use a little more content. If you are a wordsmith or a researcher and you see something that could be added, please put pen to paper. The newsletter could also benefit from your skills. At this point almost everything has been penned by yours truly.

Maybe there is a legal eagle amongst you that could look over our constitution and offer changes or improved wording to protect the Church and its members? Maybe you even have some ideas about improving our legal structure.

I am not very attentive to the material things, I have no real idea about seeking grants or raising money to support the goals of the Church, I simply reach into my own pockets but they are admittedly shallow. We are registered with the ATO as a charitable institution, but not to fundraise. Can anyone help with this? Maybe in time we could get a little plot of land with an

outdoor chapel and a small building to call a Church.

To prevent a theocracy I also need help with the spiritual side of things. Currently most of the ideas behind the church come from only a couple of people. This should not be the case. To move forward we need more input, your ideas and ideals to help build a strong foundation. We need diversity to ensure the idea of an Interfaith Church works for many people, not just a select few.

We need to be able to offer training to our clergy so we can ensure they are maintaining set standards and that these standards are set by the members of the church. If I do this alone my weaknesses will shine through, as will any unrealistic expectations I may place upon myself and others in leadership roles.

We also need to be able to offer training to our members. Basic skills such as literacy and computer skills are things I would like to see offered for free. Writing courses to help with these things takes time and experience, more time than I can spare at the moment.

If you are an educator or an educated person; if you have experience using a Moodle education platform; if you are an expert in a spiritual or religious system; if you have qualifications in psychology, sociology, philosophy or any area that may help your fellow man, please talk to me about how you can get involved in the Interfaith College.

There are too many areas to mention in which you can become involved in building this new Church. If you have the time and the drive, please get in touch.

## About the Author

Reverend Peter Brabyn is the founding minister of the Interfaith Church of Australia.

Born to non-practicing Christians of different denominations, Peter could not find a religion that 'fit' for many years, as such he was a professed atheist for the first half of his life. In his 20's he began 'seeking God' but was dissatisfied with what organised religion had to offer though he did become a very spiritual person. He soon considered himself agnostic as he felt he could not adequately define the thing that many people called God yet did believe in the divine source he felt they were relating to.

In 2005 Peter had a divine revelation and felt called to serve deity, still felt he could not define who or what deity is. In 2007 Peter co-founded Interfaith Australia with the goal of promoting interfaith ideas and providing information on religion and spirituality. In 2011, this idea was reformed into the Interfaith Church of Australia which is now a registered non-profit charitable institution.

For more information about the Interfaith Church, its goals and ideals please see [www.ic.org.au](http://www.ic.org.au).



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## Prayers & Candles

Peter Mullett suffered a severe stroke in August. While it was touch and go for a while, Peter is making a remarkable recovery. Last week he even walked up my driveway to visit me on his way back to hospital.

Peter is currently allowed out of hospital only on day release. He has made some cognitive and physical progress but still has a very long way to go.

Please light a candle or say a prayer to assist Peter in his recovery and to support his partner Jodi and his children Jack, Cameron and Riley.

Amelia W has just lost a friend to a car accident. This young lady has lost two close friends in a very short space of time.

Please light a candle or say a prayer to assist her through this trying time and reinforce the support she gets from her parents Kerriann and Chris.

## Just a thought – Links to make you think

We have a few places you can get involved on social media. Sharing ideas is one way to help each of us to move forward. Get involved as little or as much as you wish to. Get others thinking!



[Interfaith Church Facebook page](#)

[Interfaith Church Facebook group](#)

[Rev. Peter on Facebook](#)

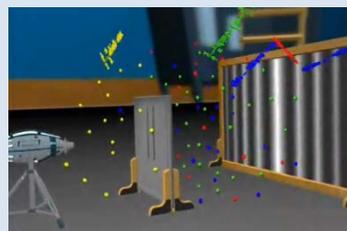
[Rev. Peter on LinkedIn](#)



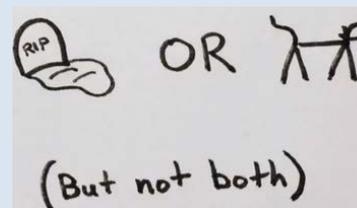
Here are a few more things to get you thinking



[Plato's Allegory of the Cave](#)



[Quantum Physics – The double slit experiment](#)



[Schrödinger's Cat – Dead or Alive](#)



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## Thanks

A special thank you to Anji Porter.

Anji donated a couple of bags full of brand new t-shirts to the Church in June.



At this stage we have managed to sell about 30 of them, this has helped pay for our website and hosting for two years and has assisted with a micro-loan that helped out a family in need

These t-shirts are leftovers from Pagan Pride Day, many more are still available.

## Chapters

We currently have two operational chapters of the Church (neither has premises).

Reverend Peter Brabyn runs the main church from his home in Waterford West, in Qld and

Reverend Nisaba Merrieweather runs a second chapter from her home at The Entrance in NSW.

## Events



[MIRTH \(Mens Inter-Religious Talk & Health\)](#); Waterford Tavern; Sat. Nov.17 2-4pm

Come along and join the Ministry of Beer!

For more info, click on the logo. Please RSVP via the [Facebook Event page](#)

## Remembrance Day

To the Unknown Soldier, to all who have served, and to those that have left us in service - Thank you.

Thank you for creating a life than is comfortable, for protecting the way of life we now enjoy, for ensuring our ancestors survived and for enabling our children to exist.

At the going down of the sun, we shall remember them.

Your service and your commitment were not in vain.

We prosper due to your sacrifice and for this we thank you.