



The Fifth Bi-Annual Meeting of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders, Oxford (UK), March 2012

On the final day of the meeting, leaders were asked to reflect on what had been accomplished. They were asked to consider three questions:

- 1. What does Interreligious Friendship mean to you?***
- 2. How do you practise Interreligious Friendship?***
- 3. What messages and practices of Interreligious Friendship can you take back from this meeting to your community?***

Some chose to respond independently to each question while others integrated their answers.

Bishop Gali Bali



1. What does interreligious friendship mean to me?

Interreligious friendship is a gift of God given to two persons because it is God's grace that has brought them together with mutual understanding and love. The friends begin to realize that they are walking together on a spiritual journey to the home of their ultimate destiny; they further understand that unless the Lord is with them to guide and inspire their journey they would go astray; they gradually feel a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood since we are children of the same Heavenly father. Mutual sharing, helping and thus enriching with spiritual goods that will then naturally happen.

2. How can I practice it?

I view my life as a garden irrigated by the grace and love of God and I love to see in any garden as many flowers as possible with beautiful colours. I consider a person of another religious tradition coming into my life as another beautiful flower blossoming in the garden of my life.

I will try to invite the religious leaders of different traditions and establish friendly relations with them. I will then form a kind of stable group or association and start sharing understanding of scriptures, festivals, rituals, customs etc. We will also discuss ethical issues affecting the society in order to enlighten the public at large. When occasions arise we will raise our voice through the media condemning atrocities, violations of human rights, cases of injustice, corruption etc. I will accept invitation to attend the religious functions, weddings and other such events of other religious leaders.

3. What can I bring back to my community?



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- I will promote interreligious understanding to my priests, sisters, teachers and other educational laity.
- I will try to convince my fellow bishops in my state to provide space in their schedule and meetings for religious fellowships.
- I will explain about the good work being done by the Elijah Interfaith Institute and treat it as a source of inspiration for our interfaith programmes.
- I will ask our faithful to pray for peace and harmony among religions and have a positive attitude towards other religions.