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The Australasian Theological Forum

Invite you a lecture and discussion
To Launch

***Being Faithful in Diversity:
Religions and Social Policy in MultiFaith Societies***

By

Gary D Bouma

Emeritus Professor of Sociology
UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific
Associate Priest, St John's Anglican Parish East Malvern

**MAY 26, 2011
4:30 – 6:30pm**

**MONASH UNIVERSITY, Caulfield Campus
Level 8. Building H, Dandenong Rd**

The Programme

- 4:30** Arrival Refreshments
- 4:50** Lecture by Gary Bouma: 'Religious Diversity and Social Policy'
- 5:20** Comments by Professor James Haire, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.
- 5:40** Comments by Barney Zwartz, *The Age*.
- 5:50** Discussion

This lecture / discussion is one of a series of events celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology at Monash University

Please RSVP for catering purposes: Nel Halloran nel.halloran@monash.edu

BEING FAITHFUL IN DIVERSITY

“This is a critically important book. In it the current doyen of the sociology of religion in Australia, Professor Gary Bouma, deals with the development of religious diversity in Australasia and comparable societies, and then goes on to analyse how it is possible to be faithful to one’s own beliefs in the face of emerging religious competition and possible conflict. The data is presented and analysed, and the argumentation is patent and cogent. This excellent book needs to be read by religious leaders, theologians and all those concerned with cohesive societies everywhere”. (Reverend Professor James Haire AM, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and Director Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre Charles Sturt University.)

“Gary Bouma effectively and articulately explores one of the most pressing social issues of contemporary global society: how to negotiate religious diversity and to ensure a meaningful actualization of religious freedom. Through his exploration of key ideas such as inclusion/exclusion, competitive piety, negative othering, social cohesion and essentialised religious voices, Professor Bouma highlights the challenges and possibilities inherent in a religiously diverse society.” (Professor Lori Beaman, Canada Research Chair in the Contextualisation of Religion in a Diverse Canada, University of Ottawa).

“Working from demographic data, Professor Bouma shows that we face a new religious diversity and that this poses serious issues for public policy, the theologies of the different faith groups, and social cohesion. Based on a sophisticated analysis of the implications of these unprecedented religious differences, he offers a novel and nuanced solution of how we might peacefully live together. While not everyone will agree with the answer from this Anglican sociologist, *Being Faithful in Diversity* deserves to be read and discussed in all religious communities and could provide a platform for a new and more realistic dialogue between them.

This book offers an accessible, original argument, from an academic and ‘person of faith’, of how to develop inter-religious harmony in a modern democratic state without throwing the traditional baby out with the liberal bathwater.

This study of religious diversity gives a comprehensive overview of the salient issues and will be of interest to theologians, social scientists, policy makers and the educated lay public.” (Professor Paul Morris, Religious Studies, Victoria University of Wellington)

“Gary Bouma’s lectures distil a career’s worth of insight on religious diversity into an accessible and very readable survey. His honest and persistent inquiry not only gives an eloquent account of religious difference and secularism, but offers careful and subtle clues to facing the challenges. The author presents diversity both as a challenge and a solution; critiquing attempts to find supposed universal or objective criteria to handle the challenge of diversity, Bouma sees even diverse approaches to handling difference as themselves a resource for a healthy society.” (Assoc. Prof Andrew McGowan, Warden, Trinity College, The University of Melbourne)

