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Into to Religion

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I attend a Pentecostal church with my family every Sunday. Our faith is important to how we live our lives, so it is interesting to see how others see God. For my second visit I attended the Christian-Buddhism dialog at LCCC. The room was a lecture hall, with seats in front of the podium, where the people spoke. It was nice to be able to listen to the similarities and the differences when I sat in on the Buddhism and Christian dialog. There were about 200 people in attendance for this seminar. The Buddhist went first in the discussion. He had a shaved head, a black robe with a red sash that had a yellow clip on it; he wore sandals on his feet and beads around his neck. He stood up to the platform to speak and bowed, then rang a bell 3 times, then chanted, and rang the bell again 3 times He spoke a lot about the non-attachment but the main subject of the discussion was the value of compassion. How to have compassion and how the world will change if we all would practice the life filled with compassion for each other. The Buddhist talked about the 3 poisons that interfere with a person's path to the divine; ill will, ignorance, and cravings. He also talked about the Metha, this meaning loving kindness. How having compassion for everyone and everything could bring us to a place in this world where we all had compassion and made a peaceful world. He also mentioned the Heart Sutra as a book used by many Buddhist. This book is a book used to chant and do the prayer they do. Also, a flower was mentioned, the lotus flower; It stood for enlightenment. The question on non-attachment or detachment was a little confusing to me. From what I understand they are meaning to not try and attach ourselves to the worldly things around us.

The priest that spoke wore a black robe with a gold chain around his neck. He also spoke about Compassion, but had a different view of how that would come about. He stated that the way to compassion was through suffering with one and other. He spoke of how Jesus truly knows the suffering as he was slain on the cross for us all, and that we could get to heaven through Jesus. He also talked about how, in the bible, everyone was taken from Jesus image and that people needed to act like it; to have compassion for everyone through suffering along with them. It was interesting when he talked about how each of us needed to think about the life we are living. Not only what it is doing to us, but how our lives are going to affect the others in the world. The comment he shared was this, "Living simply so that others may simply live."

Later in the question and answer section, my question was read first. Why does each wear the clothing and things that they wear? What was the meaning, if any behind it? It was interesting to me that, like many other questions, the Priest mentioned that he had looked up the answers before he got to the meeting. Whereas the Buddhist knew the answers to most of what was asked. I think that if you are going to head up a church of whatever kind that you should know about why things are done. The Buddhist said that the shaved head was a symbol of the non-attachment they stand for. The robe was actually an ancient symbol that was added upon. Long ago, as he stated, they would wear the sash only leaving the shoulder open. Then, they would walk around the elders with that open shoulder exposed in a circle to symbolize, the fact they would carry a burden to the elders. The Priest had mentioned that he looked online to find the meaning of what he wore and found that it was to show a non-attachment to the material things of the world.

It was interesting the similarities in the conversations. They both spoke of a different world where everyone really cared about each other, a world where everyone had compassion for

another, even though they see compassion in different ways. They both pointed out that we should have compassion for even the people who hate us. The differences, from my point of view came when they spoke about what or who is entitled to compassion, and how we are going to be connected to the divine as Jesus is not followed in Buddhism.