

‘A rose by any other name?’: Navigating through the Maze of Religious Dialogue Descriptions

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The field of religious dialogue is fraught with a bewildering variety of names to describe essentially four basic interrelationships, namely: (a) interreligious dialogue, (b) intrareligious dialogue, (c) interideological dialogue, and (d) intraideological dialogue. These taxonomic relationships, other naming variants, and a survey of evaluative dialogue labels were identified and briefly explicated. It was concluded that academic precision requires a more thoughtful consideration of what one actually means by “dialogue.” General nomenclature recommendations were proffered.

Introduction

Religious dialoguing in the context of globalisation, postmodernism and ideational pluralism is not simple, whether it refers to “religious encounters” (Zago, 2000:5), “inter-religious relations” (Ajitsingh, 1998:33), “interreligious contacts” (Zago, 2000:5), “interreligious conversations” (Zago, 2000:10) or “ecumenical conversations” (Valkenberg, 2000:109). Indeed, there are innumerable names for the process based upon on who is dialoguing who, what sort of dialogue it purports to be, and which time period was involved. Descriptions within the literature can also be confusing, inaccurate or misleading, as well as change meaning and semantic hue over time, for example, “the word “ecumenical” for a long time meant “inter-confessional”” (Ariarajah, 2000:10).

These taxonomic contours are in need of identification, clarification and mapping out, particularly the practice of using the same words, terms and labels to describe fundamentally different relationships. For example, intrareligious dialogue had frequently referred to ecumenism, but for Raimon Panikkar it meant an individualistic psychospiritual exploration:

It does not begin with doctrine, theology and diplomacy. It is intra, which means that if I do not discover in myself the terrain where the Hindu, the Muslim, the Jew and the atheist may have a place--in my heart, in my intelligence, in my life--I will never be able to enter into a genuine dialogue with him. As long as I do not open my heart and do not see that the other is not an other but a part of myself who enlarges and completes me, I will not arrive at dialogue (Tincq and Cunneen, 2000:835).

As Kate Zebiri (1997:36) pointed out: “There is no agreed definition of dialogue; it functions as an umbrella term covering many kinds of activity.”

Consequently, this deficiency needs to be addressed and the naming variants identified, classified and taught in class. The following is a cursory examination of these various relationships, activities and terminological variations, especially for those interested in “the dialogue ministry,” alternatively called “the ministry of dialogue” (Ariarajah, 1999:83).

A preliminary survey of the literature suggests four fundamental taxonomic relationships, namely: (1) **interreligious dialogue**, a between religions encounter (e.g., Religion-A vs. Religion-B), (2) **intrareligious dialogue**, a within faith encounter (e.g., Religion-A₁ vs. Religion-A₂), (3) **interideological dialogue**, a between religion and ideology encounter (e.g., Religion-A vs. Ideology-A), and (4) **intraideological dialogue**, a between ideologies encounter (e.g., Ideology-A₁ vs. Ideology-A₂). Its multiple names and variants are documented herein.

1.0 Interreligious Dialogue: A Between Religions Encounter

Interreligious dialogue (Borelli, 1993:551; Bragt, 2000:121; Duran, 1988:211; Ogden, 1994:5; Yadav, 1988:183), alternatively spelled as either **inter-religious dialogue** (Cobb Jr., 1982:39; Tracy, 1990:27), **inter-religious dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:41), **inter-dialogues** (Swidler, 1990:61), or **inter-tradition dialogue** (Cobb Jr., 1990:116). This refers to dialogue between fundamentally different religions, for example, Christians (Religion-A) and Muslims (Religion-B). Sometimes these religions are specifically labelled, for example: **Buddhist-Christian dialogue** (Tracy, 1990:73), **Catholic-Jewish colloquium** (Boys, Lee and Bass, 1995:262), **Catholic-Jewish dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:152), **Christian-Buddhist dialogue** (Braybrooke, 1993:120), **Christian-Hindu encounter** (Sharpe, 1974:80), **Christian-Jewish dialogue** (Jacob, 1991:73), **Christian-Muslim dialogue** (Pratt, 1994:11), **Christian-Muslim encounter** (Pratt, 1994:8), **Confucian-Christian dialogue** (Jochim, 1995:35) alternatively **Christian-Confucian dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:152).

There is also **Hindu-Christian dialogue** (Panikkar, 1989:475), **Hindu-Muslim dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:346), **Jewish-Christian dialogue** (Swidler, 1975:581), **Jewish-Muslim dialogue** (Younan, 1995:17), **Judaean-Christian dialogue** (Neusner, 1992:3), **Muslim-Christian dialogue** (van der Bent, 1994:120), **Muslim-Jewish dialogue** (Samuelson, 1987:239), **Saivite-Christian dialogue** (Thangaraj, 1991:163), **Sikh-Christian dialogue** (Braybrooke, 1993:120). At other times it is called a **Jewish/ Interfaith service** (Martin, 1993:113), a **Pan-Asian Buddhist-Christian meeting** (van der Bent, 1994:122), or a **Christian-Buddhist dialogue between Euro-Americans and Japanese** (Corless, 1993:267). Sometimes these dialogues can be characterised as personal exchanges, such as the **Lapide-Moltmann dialogue** (Argus, 1981:17), where Pinchas Lapide is an Orthodox Israeli Jew, and Jurgen Moltmann is a Protestant Christian scholar.

Interreligious dialogue is alternatively called: **dialogical conversations** (Lochhead, 1988:80), **dialogical encounter** (Pratt, 1994:13), **discursive dialogue** (Sonn, 1989:453), **discursive theological dialogue** (Hick, 1980:80), **ecumenical encounter** (Turner, 1987:14), **ecumenism of religions** (Ariarajah, 1998:18),

exterior dialogue (Jochim, 1995:36), **external interreligious dialogue** (Krieger, 1993:352), **intercommunity dialogue** (Fernando, 1988:116) or **inter-community dialogue** (Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, 1992:19), **interreligious conversation** (Cox, 1989:12), **interreligious discussion** (Breslauer, 1984:19), **interreligious encounter** (Cox, 1989:16), **inter-religious encounters** (Morgan, 1995:163), **larger ecumenism** (Cox, 1989:49), **multi-religious dialogue** (Rao, 1978:48), **new ecumenism** (Ariarajah, 1998:18), **theological dialogue** (Hassan, 1986:133), **the dialogue of theologies** (Valkenberg, 2000:112), **wider ecumenism** (Cox, 1989:1), **world ecumenical dialogue** (Hick, 1980:97), **global interreligious encounter** (King, 1998:42) or **global ecumenism** (King, 1998:42).

Parliamentary dialogue (Eck, 1986:5) refers to large Parliaments/Assemblies that create, for short periods of time, forums for interreligious discussion, for example, the first World Parliament of Religion held at the Chicago's World Fair in 1893. Dialogue amongst differing monastic communities (e.g., Tibetan Buddhist and Hindu; Benedictine and Zen) is referred to as: **intermonastic dialogue** (Corless, 1993:266), **inter-monastic dialogue** (Corless, 1993:266), **intermonastic exchanges** (Fredericks, 1998:167), an **intermonastic gathering** (Coff, 1989:209), a **monastic interreligious dialogue** (Borelli, 1993:552), an **interreligious monastic, spiritual encounter** (van der Bent, 1994:122). More specifically, a **Buddhist-Christian Monastic Dialogue** (Teasdale, 1994:20) or a **Buddhist-Christian monastic/contemplative dialogue** (Cabezon, 1999:116).

Multilateral dialogue (Spae, 1980:217) refers to a team version of interreligious dialogue (e.g., Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians meet with Zen and Tibetan Buddhists). Interreligious dialogue between three different partners is referred to as: **trialogue** (Kung, 1988:193), **tri-partite dialogues** (Gordis, 1991:468), **trilateral conversations** (Kung, 1988:193), **trilateral dialogue** (Kung, 1988:207), **trilogue** (Smith, 1978:142), or more specifically: **Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue** (Arkoun, 1989:523), **Jewish-Christian-Muslim interreligious dialogue** (Swidler, 1982:10), **Jewish-Christian-Muslim triologue** (Duran, 1988:212), **Muslim-Christian-Jewish dialogue** (Hassan, 1986:138), or **Triologue (Jewish, Christian, Muslim)** (Carmody and Carmody, 1994:3/51). A **Judeo-Christian-Islamic-Buddhist dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:139) refers to interreligious dialogue between East and West participants, and where the West acknowledges its triune Jewish, Christian and Muslim roots.

Some have called this between religions encounter: **interconfessional relations** (Neuner, 1991:291), **interfaith assemblies** (Hummel, 1987:28), **interfaith collaboration** (Samartha, 1981:29), **interfaith colloquium** (Cox, 1989:5), **interfaith confessionalism** (Morgan, 1995:167), **interfaith conversation** (Cox, 1989:4), **interfaith dialogue** (Ariarajah, 1991:281) or **interfaith dialogue** (Potter, 1988:6), **interfaith dialogue and ecumenism** (Marriage, 1996:1), **inter-faith discussions** (Brown, 1984:113), **interfaith encounter** (Cox, 1989:14), **interfaith exchange** (Cox, 1989:8), **interface experiences** (Marriage, 1996:1), **interfaith forums** (Baldock, 1994:27), **interfaith gatherings** (Morgan,

1995:158), **interfaith meetings** (Baldock, 1994:27), **interfaith talks** (Duran, 1988:211) and **interfaith witness** (Eck, 1987:147).

As S. Wesley Ariarajah (1998:8) noted: “in the explosion of the literature in this field, ‘interreligious’ and ‘interfaith’ are used interchangeably, almost beyond recovery!” Ursula King (1998:44) suggested that this difference was rooted in geography, and then added a unique twist to its meaning:

In North America reference is mostly made to ‘interreligious dialogue’ (Germans too speak about *inter-religiöser Dialog*, which shows that this notion is found elsewhere). In Britain people talk more of ‘interfaith dialogue’, thereby indicating perhaps that dialogue does not occur between religions *per se*, between religions as systems of beliefs and practices, but happens among people as a personal, existential engagement in the process of which the persons dialoguing with each other are touched on a deeper, more inward level. Their very understanding of faith comes into play; their entire world-view may be called into question or be enriched and transformed; and they may feel empowered to collaborate with people of other faiths to achieve common aims.

When Wayne Teasdale (1999:88) approached the 14th Dalai Lama and suggested a joint Christian-Buddhist community, he called this “an experiment in **existential dialogue**” which presumably could lead to **interreligious realization** (Aitken, 1999:99). Interestingly, Sarah Thorley (2000:190) admitted that in her article: “the words ‘inter faith’ are deliberately written separately to avoid any misleading impression that there is some kind of new religion called ‘Interfaith’.”

The relationship is further complicated by the phrase: “**ecumenical gatherings, whether interdenominational or interreligious**” (King, 1998:42). Alternatively, this fundamental relationship between religions is called: **interreligious conversation** (Constanelos, 1989:397), **interreligious discourse** (Sharpe, 1987:347), or **interreligious relations** (Borelli, 1993:552). These are examples of **interreligious experience** (Cox, 1989:11), what Paul Knitter (1998:81) called “multifaith *communicatio in sacris* - a sharing of religious experience.” Hopefully, it fosters **interfaith consciousness** (Cox, 1989:11), **interfaith understanding** (Cox, 1989:1), an **interfaith ethic** (Knitter, 1998:75), and the emergence of a **culture of dialogue** (Gyger, 1998:95) or an **interreligious dialogue culture** (Gyger, 1998:94). Alternatively, an **interfaith culture** which itself is symptomatic of “a whole new religious consciousness in the making” (Ariarajah, 1998:14).

Monocentric ecumenism (Hummel, 1987:28) refers to movements “putting themselves into the centre and as satellites inviting others to gather around them and to share what they claim to be the inner secret of all religions.” Then there is Jürgen Moltmann’s (2000: 20-21) distinction between **direct dialogue** and **indirect dialogue**. The former is religious dialogue between different world religions dealing with the confrontation and comparison of their various religious concepts regarding transcendence, salvation, humanity, nature etc. The latter involves the same partners except the concern is not with exchanging religious

concepts about themselves, but rather, focusing upon third factor issues (e.g., social questions at the local level, or the environment at the global level).

2.0 Intrareligious Dialogue: A Within Faith Encounter

Intrareligious dialogue (Suchocki, 1987:160), alternatively spelled **intra-religious dialogue** (Panikkar, 1975:408) or **intra-dialogues** (Swidler, 1990:61). refers to dialogue between different faiths/religions/Churches/communities within the same broad religious tradition. For example, Roman Catholic Christians (Religion-A₁) and Greek Orthodox Christians (Religion-A₂). Alternatively, Sunni and Shia Muslims; Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhists, Reform and Orthodox Jews etc. They will have different backgrounds and outlooks, but are part of the broad family of the faith (Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish etc.).

Specifically speaking, they can be referred to as: **Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues** (Huffman, 1993:157), **Apostolic Church-Presbyterian dialogue** (Sandidge, 1992:243), **Catholic-Orthodox dialogue** (Legrand, 1995:127), **inter-Orthodox-Catholic dialogue** (Early, 1979c:1821), **Lutheran-Catholic dialogue** (Early, 1979c:1821), the **Lutheran-Moravian dialogue** (Swan, 1998:355), or **Roman Catholic-ecumenical dialogues** (Tracy, 1994/5:116). When dealing with larger scale constituencies it can be called, for example, **International Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue** (Birmele, 1994/5:120) or **world-level Lutheran/Catholic dialogue** (Wicks, 2000:25).

Indeed, Ans Joachim van der Bent (1994:51-52) reported that such dialogues have taken place amongst the following faiths: **Anglican-Lutheran, Anglican-Methodist, Anglican-Oriental Orthodox, Anglican-Orthodox, Anglican-Reformed, Anglican-Roman Catholic, Baptist-Lutheran, Baptist-Reformed, Baptist-Roman Catholic, Disciples of Christ-Reformed, Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic, Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox, Lutheran-Methodist, Lutheran-Orthodox, Lutheran-Reformed, Lutheran-Roman Catholic, Methodist-Orthodox, Methodist-Reformed, Methodist-Roman Catholic, Old Catholic-Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox-Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic, Orthodox-Reformed, Orthodox-Roman Catholic, Pentecostal-Roman Catholic and Reformed-Roman Catholic.**

This general arrangement is alternatively known as: **bilateral dialogue** (Meyer, 1991:281), **ecumenical dialogue** (Constantelos, 1989:394), **dialogical encounter** (Ingram, 1989:16), **interchurch dialogue** (Neuner, 1991:289), **inter-church discussion** (Zabolotsky, 1977:69), **inter-communion** (Early, 1979a:1819-1820), **interconfessional dialogue** (Kung, 1987:xiii), **interconfessionalism** (Early, 1979b:1820), **interfaith dialogue** (Early, 1979c:1820), **interior dialogue** (Jochim, 1995:35), **internal dialogue** (Samartha, 1981:33), **international dialogue** (Kerr, 1985:36), **intra-ecclesial unity** (Rajashekar, 1987:13), **intrafaith dialogue** (Neuner, 1991:287), **"intra-religious" conferences** (Hummel, 1987:28), and **theological dialogue** (Constantelos, 1989:396). Specific arrangements within this general ilk are called **inter-confessional bilateral dialogues** (Ariarajah, 2000:7).

When applied specifically to Christianity and its universe of discourse, it is referred to as: **inter-Christian dialogue** (Zabolotsky, 1977:69, meaning “c”), **intra-Christian dialogue** (Crabtree, 1989:349), **intra-Christian dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:41), **Christian ecumenism** (Ariarajah, 1998:18), or **intra-Christian ecumenism** (Dulles, 1992:184). When narrowed further, it refers to, for example, **Roman Catholic ecumenism** (Swidler, 1990:34), an **inter-Orthodox conference** (Constantelos, 1989:393), **inter-Orthodox consultation** (FitzGerald and Bouteneff, 1998:92), **inter-Orthodox encounter** (Constantelos, 1989:400), a **Pan-Orthodox conference** (Constantelos, 1989:393) or a **pan-African inter-Orthodox consultation** (FitzGerald and Bouteneff, 1998:99). The overall goal is the fostering of intra-Christian unity and collaboration. When applied to other religions it can become, for example, an **intra-Jewish dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:26), or an **intra-Muslim dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:26).

Multilateral dialogue (Wainwright, 1991:292) refers to intrareligious dialogue which goes beyond bilateral dialogue to incorporate national or regional issues (e.g., the Church of North India trying to merge with the Church of South India). An **ecumenical-theological conversation** (Mulder, 2000:99) is essentially an intrareligious conversation between faith members *about* the religious other. For example, Christians from the Middle East talking with Christians from Western Europe about their relations with Jews and Muslims. Alternatively, it can be called **intra-institutional dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:25) which has a legalistic resonance and refers to the concentric circles of debate within a specific Christian family (e.g., Roman Catholicism).

Overall, these sorts of official intrareligious dialogues are not to be confused with faith members discussing their issues within their own groups via luncheons or newsletters, although in principle it is essentially the same thing. Such practitioners can be called **ecumenical theologians**:

...not so much because they are directly working on the “unity of the church”, but simply because they no longer look at theology from a purely confessional perspective. Today, most of the theologians and biblical scholars would see themselves as theologians of the church universal and of their work as nourishing the total life of the church (Ariarajah, 2000:8).

3.0 Interideological Dialogue: A Between Religion and Ideology Encounter

The above two categories could be described as **dialogue with religions** (Swidler, 1990:164). However, **interideological dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:24) refers to encounters between different ideologies/belief systems, whether these belief systems be religious in nature (i.e., creeds which include the transcendent), or nonreligious/secular (i.e., creeds without the transcendent). The term is usually reserved for specific religion-ideology encounters who have important things to say about religion and humanity *per se*. For example, it can include dialogues between Christians (Religion-A) and Marxists (Ideology-A), alternatively, Atheists and Jews, Sceptics and Buddhists. This engagement is known in Marxist and other circles as: **dialogue with ideologies** (Swidler, 1990:165), **ideological**

dialogue (Boutin, 1978:198), **international dialogue** (Lukacs, 1978:102), **interreligious-interideological** (Sigal, 1993:110), **secular dialogue** (Sonn, 1989:453), **semi-secular dialogue** (Sharpe, 1992:233), **theistic/non-theistic ecumenical dialogue** (Losel, 1989:191), **theoretical dialogue** (Lukacs, 1978:100), or specifically speaking, **Christian-Marxist dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:13), or **Catholic-Marxist dialogue** (Pereira, 1987:264) for example.

The **dialogue of deeds** (Borelli, 1993:551) refers to believers in different belief systems who involve themselves in programs of joint action. Usually “of a humanitarian, social, economic or political nature which are directed towards the liberation and advancement of mankind” (The Secretariat for Non-Christians, 1990:62), and irrespective of their convictions (e.g., Religionism, Atheism, Agnosticism, Scepticism, Marxism, Feminism, Humanism, Existentialism). Huhsiang Fung (1989:45) referred to this, and other interreligious dialogue events as **interfaithful dialogues**. **Tetralogue** (Smith, 1978:142) generically describes dialogue between four different participants (e.g., Muslims, Jews and Christians mediated by atheistic philosophers).²

4.0 Intraideological Dialogue: A Between Ideologies Encounter

This form of dialogue is the logical consequence of the above three forms, and is usually reserved to describe encounters between nonreligious (non-theistic) ideologies. For example, between the varieties of Communism such as Maoism (Ideology-A₁) and Leninism (Ideology-A₂). Alternatively, between different strands of Feminism (e.g., **feminist/womanist dialogue** (Williams, 1993:68) or **feminist-womanist dialogue** (Williams, 1993:71). However, authentic *religious* dialogue, or *religious*, **theological dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:159), as opposed to **social dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:159), requires authorised religious/believer representatives to be participating on at least one side of the dialogue table. Interestingly, Radmila Radic (1999:81) suggested that Marxism is “an atheistic religion” with a proselytising function born from the confusion over defining the line between the religious and the nonreligious. If so, then it is variously subsumed into the above three categories, and if not, it is amenable to similar structural analysis within its own ideological domain.

‘Names R Us’: Other Dialogue Descriptors and Interaction Possibilities

The descriptions for interreligious and intrareligious encounters do not stop there. For example, the terms: **interfaith movement** (Morgan, 1995:169), **dialogue of religions** (Sharpe, 1987:344), **dialogue business** (Duran, 1988:212), the **enterprise of dialogue** (Lipner, 1982:156), and **ecumenical ecumenism** (Panikkar, 1989:486) cover the entire religious dialogue enterprise. **Interreligious encounter** (Kateregga, 1989:118) refers to meetings between religious persons, each having a particular experience of the mysteries of God or the world. **Verbal dialogue** (Pieterse, 1990:239) refers to dialogue between parishioners and their preacher(s). **Dialogue praxis** (Sharpe, 1992:233) refers to the nuts-and-bolts of dialoguing, while **interreligious praxis** (Law, 1994:39) refers to the formative

personal journey into religious interconnectedness. One interpretation of **official dialogue** had a unique character:

Participants have some representative role. Much of the work is to remove misunderstanding and build up good relations, as well as encouraging practical cooperation on moral issues and social concerns. More speculative discussions about questions of "truth" may be inappropriate (Braybrooke, 1993:120).

A variant of official dialogue is the **dialogue among leaders and experts**, that is, dialogue "among leaders of different religions [which] takes on a symbolic significance as examples that foster positive relationships in their respective communities" (Zago, 2000:12). Another related variant is the **dialogue of worldwide officials** (Valkenberg, 2000:112) which is a form of **dialogue between spokespersons** (Valkenberg, 2000:112), and sometimes between sacred servants, as in **Priest-Rabbi dialogue** (Dorff, 1999:8).

Transdialogue (Samuelson, 1987:236) refers to statements about interreligious dialogue that are not affected by the commentators' religion; their validity is seen as an independent variable. **Interreligious, interideological dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:24) occurs within and between each religious and/or ideological community, while **intrareligious, intraideological dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:24) occurs between coreligionists and/or coideologists. **Intra- and inter-religious, interideological dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:47) covers dialogue possibilities within and between (co-) religionists and (co-) ideologists. **Cross-religious dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:207) is "not fundamentally between religious traditions but between human beings, not between religious points of view but between persons whose identity happens to be religious." While dialogue that ceases to be secondary reflection about religion but goes beyond dialogue to the point of itself becoming a religious quest has been called **dialogy** (Carl Raschke quoted in Cox, 1989:169).

Doctrinal dialogue (Swidler, 1988:7) focuses upon the doctrinal concerns of both parties. **Biblical dialogue** (Hesselgrave, 1978:235) focuses upon biblical concerns. **Defensive dialogue** (Gordis, 1991:469) is engaged in protecting against severe interreligious confrontation, while **dialogical theology** (Panikkar, 1987:102) focuses upon the theological aspects of dialoguing. Dialoguers themselves are labelled **dialogians** (Law, 1994:44), and persons who are not officially involved in the dialogue but who are invited to attend on-going dialogue sessions are engaging in **intercommunications** (Saliba, 1993:79).

Dialogical dialogue (Dean, 1988:172) does not seek to win or to convince, but to search together from different vantage points. **Dialectical dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:199) occurs when each voice is locked within pre-established points of view. This differs from **eclectic** or **syncretistic dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:199) where uncritical mixtures or assimilations of religious elements take place. **God-initiated dialogue** (Stadler, 1982:52) labels the idea that God's relation with the world is dialogical for the sake of the salvation of humanity. When coupled with an apostolic mission, as an example of spiritual communication, it is called the

dialogue of salvation (Paul II, 1999:37) “because it seeks to discover, clarify and understand better the signs of the age-long dialogue which God maintains with mankind” (Paul II, 1999:40). **Faithful dialogue** (Samartha, 1981:1-14) stays within the bounds of the faith’s limitations and conforms to its criteria of truth and reality.

Interestingly, interreligious dialogue that is not real but a hypothetical story is called **fictional dialogue** (Klostermaier, 1975:158). This is an imaginative conversation between two or more literary characters (of different religions/faiths) that follows theatrical and novelistic conventions rooted in *mimesis* so to explore religious issues beyond the normal range of scholarly activity. As Christine Mangala Frost (1996:216) argued:

No doubt, a well-conducted, rational discourse can deal with concepts, principles, even myths and symbols, with admirable clarity and precision; but the process of abstraction removes them from where they are rooted, in human experience. The scholar can present the bare bones; it is the privilege of the novelist to flesh out the bones and sensitize the reader to the hidden human cost of any belief-system, by highlighting ambivalent and often painful insights that otherwise might get glossed over.

In general, it is a mode of religious communication that engages one’s emotions and requires spiritual empathy. Fictional dialogue is sometimes referred to as **imaginative dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:345), **imaginary conversation** (Samartha, 1981:156), or an **intra-religious reflection** which:

...occurs when one deliberately brings several belief systems, religious figures, spiritual practices, or sacred texts into dialogue within one’s creative imagination. In other words, one becomes at least two voices when the voice of one’s own tradition and the voice of another tradition are placed in reflective conversation with one another (Kramer, 1993:197).

Dialogue Masses (Rosendall, 1979:2289) refers to a congregation that recites aloud Mass prayers to celebrate the Eucharist Liturgy. The **dialogue of charity** (O’Collins and Farrugia, 1991:55) “consists in signs and gestures that express both the common faith already shared by all members of the dialogue and their desire to remove obstacles blocking full communion.” While a dialogue seeking further understanding by focusing on the specific context of the dialogue is called **inter-contextual dialogue** (Horsfjord, 2001:41).

There is also **Buberian dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:347) or **human dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:347), alternatively known as the **dialogue of life** (Borelli, 1993:551), the “**dialogue**” of **daily life** (Brockway and Rajashekar, 1987:177), the **continuing dialogue of life** (Ariarajah, 1991:286), the **dialogue of life and faith** (Abugan, 1992:19), the **dialogue of coexistence and life** (Zago, 2000:10), alternatively, the **dialogue of life and peaceful coexistence** (Zago, 2000:10). This refers to the interaction between persons of one’s own faith and other faiths during the ongoingness of life which can involve developing “relationships of good neighborliness and occasional cooperation” (Zago, 2000:10). It “is a manner of acting, an attitude, and a spirit which guides one’s conduct. It implies concern,

respect, and hospitality towards the other” (The Secretariat for Non-Christians, 1990:62) and “which would appreciate every positive impulse” (Pereira, 1987:270). Pietro Rossano defined this spirit of dialogue which “for Christians means basically approaching others with the respect, love, concern, and understanding which Jesus showed to all people” (quoted in Bragt, 2000:128). And in that process, do what Cecilia Clegg (2000:308) referred to as:

...the real need to create new ecumenical space; to create new possibilities of meeting and knowing and being known. I would say today that any new space needs to be heart space. It needs to be the kind of space where, secure in the knowledge that we are beloved, we put aside old certainties and risk discovering anew and together who we are and who the other is without fear of losing our tradition or our culture.

One method of doing this is to engage in an **inter faith pilgrimage** (Thorley, 2000:181), alternatively called an **inter faith walk** (Thorley, 2000:185):

The walk together might provide an opportunity for someone who was too shy to enter an ‘other’ place of worship alone to do so with a group. It would involve meeting and talking with each other and it would include hospitality. It would be a public witness to the possibility of inter faith harmony rather than division and strife. It might possibly be the start of closer liaisons or acquaintanceships - people living in the same locality might recognize and speak to each other afterwards in a shop or a bus. It might even lead to further local meetings to take up issues of common concern (Thorley, 2000:185).

Another variant to this interreligious cohabitation approach is the **dialogue of cooperation** which “looks for means to cooperate for the common good of society at different levels...education; health; agriculture; production; ethical; social; and moral values; public order; etc.” (Zago, 2000:10). When mixed with the dialogue of life stream, it can be called the **dialogue of life and cooperation** (Zago, 2000:11).

The above dialogic stream is opposed to the **dialogue of ideas** (Younan, 1995:16), **discourse dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:347) or **intentional dialogue** (Ariarajah, 1991:286). This is where people come together to converse and share their ideas on specific issues. Intentional dialogues can be academic affairs (i.e., the formal exchange of information in organisational settings), and are also known as: **academic dialogue** (Brown, 1984:112), **intellectual dialogue** (Aarhus Workshop, 1978:72), **Platonic dialogue** (Pieterse, 1990:228), **Socratic dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:344), **technical dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:206) or the **dialogue of specialists** (Borelli, 1993:551). The aim is to exchange facts objectively. Whether it be “to confront, deepen, and enrich their respective religious heritages or to apply something of their expertise to the problems which must be faced by mankind in the course of its history” (The Secretariat for Non-Christians, 1990:62).

As a class they are referred to as **investigatory dialogues** (Samartha, 1981:32) whose purpose is to jointly investigate specific questions with the intent

of reaching agreement. Hopefully, and when able, in a scientific manner (i.e., where errors are eliminated by common consent and a continuing body of knowledge is established through intellectual agreement). This is opposed to the academic study of dialogue:

The scholarly analysis and debate about the process of dialogue represents another form of *dialogue at a meta-level*, a reflective activity of theorizing which makes us stand back from the primary, experientially rooted activity of listening, speaking and sharing in dialogue, from the attempt to enter into an in-depth participation in a person's and a people's mode of thinking, believing, praying, meditating or worshipping (King, 1998:46).

Within the same thematic stream, but toned down, is the **dialogue of mutual knowledge** (Zago, 2000:11). This is the general process of sharing religious data (e.g., feasts, social customs, creeds, theologies, histories), and where the "apex is reached by entering into the heart of the religion, which is the sublime experience of contemplation" (Zago, 2000:11).

Opposed to the above is **spiritual dialogue** (Sharpe, 1987:347), alternatively known as: **in-depth dialogue** (Swidler, 1988:17), **depth or "spiritual" dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:52), **interior dialogue** (Sonn, 1989:453), the **dialogue of religious experience** (Borelli, 1993:551; Zago, 2000:12), the **dialogue of spiritualities** (Valkenberg, 2000:108), "**an inter-religious "dialogue of spirituality"**" (Ariarajah, 1999:42), or when coupled in tandem, **interreligious and interspiritual dialogue** (Gyger, 1998:94). Participants come together to do and share their experiences of faith, duty, contemplation, prayer and meditation. This can be done formally (e.g., Zen Buddhists and Christian Benedictine monks swapping meditative practices), or informally (e.g., Westerners and Indians going to ashrams and churches to expose themselves to each other's prayer lives and common devotions - Sharpe, 1974:81-87).

Prof. Michael Pye (2001:4) categorised these general activities as **dialogue "by doing"** or a **dialogue of behaviour**, or a **dialogue of institutional relationships**, and which Paul Knitter (1998:81) envisioned by his phrase **multifaith *communicatio in sacris***. This is a delicate process aimed at "promoting and preserving the highest values and spiritual ideals of man" (The Secretariat for Non-Christians, 1990:63). However, it can also "put one's own faith to the test--even to the extent of shaking or eroding its identity...[or] become a real mutual witness of the faith as it is lived" (Zago, 2000:12). The above category appears to be the type of dialogue Ursula King (1998:44) meant by "interfaith" dialogue.

Monastic dialogue has been defined as "of an intuitive rather than theoretical nature: it emphasizes the things to be done rather than such things that need first to be clarified" (Hardy, 1990:250). When the spiritual and academic encounter each other, it has been called a **theological-intellectual dialogue** (Hardy, 1990:260). When feminist investigators use a research methodology characterised by an active and open exchange between the participant and the

researcher in a partnership of co-research, it is called **dialogic retrospection** (Humm, 1990:50).

Practical dialogue (Hick, 1980:80) is concerned with common human problems. **Personal dialogue** (Breslauer, 1991:121) refers to an individualistic approach to encounter. **Pastoral dialogue** (Pieterse, 1990:239) occurs between preachers and parishioners involving congruence, empathetic understanding, genuineness, respect, responsive listening, trust and unconditional regard. The poles of the dialogue enterprise can range between **dialogic universalists** (Cox, 1989:10) and **antidialogic particularists** (Cox, 1989:10), and can end up being a boring **dialogue-among-the-urbane** (Cox, 1989:4).

When there is a lot of dialogue theory but with little relevance to practice, it has been called **arm-chair dialogue** (Sharma, 1998:36). Closely related to it is dialoguing as an **arm-chair exercise**, that is, “a purely cognitive or theoretical pastime that does not involve the participant at an existential level” (Dunbar, 1998:463). **Pedagogic dialogue** (Sharma, 1983:229) is pre-constructed dialogue fed to students to train them (e.g., Jews in Rabbinical colleges learning *Torah* commentaries and defences), it is also referred to as **structured dialogues** (Samartha, 1981:7). **Official theological dialogue** (O’Collins and Farrugia, 1991:55) refers to discussions with representatives of various churches seeking “to reach full communion in faith and sacramental life.”

Unofficial dialogue (Saliba, 1993:78) is the opposite of **official dialogue** (Saliba, 1993:79) and refers to less organised, monitored and evaluated events, while **antidialogue** (Cram and Simmons, 1990:143) comes from Paulo Freire and denotes arrogant, mistrustful one-way communiqués; which is the opposite of “dialogue” denoting loving, humble and trusting (inter)communication. When dialogue is not truly genuine and involves attempts to marginalise groups (e.g., women), it can be referred to (in French) as ‘*un dialogue des sourds*’ (a **dialogue of the deaf**) (King, 1998:43). When women are specifically excluded, it has been tagged an **exclusive male dialogue** (King, 1998:45). This means that female dialoguers face additional barriers because she is “*doubly other*: she is of *another* faith and a *different* gender” (King, 1998:45), and so one feminist solution is to develop a **post-patriarchal dialogue** (King, 1998:52).

Interontological dialogue (Yadav, 1988:187) seeks to explore the nature of each others beingness. **Human-human dialogue** (Potter, 1988:7) occurs between two human beings as opposed to **divine-human dialogue** (Potter, 1988:7) which occurs between the transcendent and humanity, also known as **revelatory dialogue** (Potter, 1988:7) and **continuous dialogue** (Angel, 1984:153). **Intradialogue** (Anonymous, 1991:290) occurs within a person’s consciousness as a self-reflective aid to understanding inner values, attitudes, prejudices, cultural loyalties, and/or ideological presuppositions, and it is a necessary precursor to dialogue with the Other. It is alternatively known as: **inner dialogue** (Samartha, 1981:62), **interior dialogue** (Hick, 1980:80), **internal dialogue** (Wentz, 1987:5), **inner-religious dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:194), a **dialogue of conscience** (Kasper, 2000:298), or when specifically applied to Christianity, **inter-Christian dialogue** (Zabolotsky,

1977:69, meaning “a”). For Roman Catholic Archbishop Marcello Zago (2000:12), it had a more profound meaning:

Internal dialogue is a measuring of the demands of Christianity and its religious roots, whether on the personal or on the community level. It is necessary to acquire an awareness of one’s Christian identity in order to foster an authentic inculturation and to avoid syncretism. The Christian who comes from or is immersed in a culture that is not enlightened by the faith must evaluate his or her situation and institute a dialogue between the demands of Christianity and his or her milieu or ancestral heritage.

Internal intrareligious dialogue (Krieger, 1993:352) occurs where one has considered the two convictions one has internalised, and then allows revelatory symbols to “come forth that are capable of expressing the truth of both traditions.” One can also imagine **intra-personal dialogue** that is opposed to **exterior dialogue** (King, 1990:123) or **external dialogue** (Wentz, 1987:6). Conversely, one can also imagine **inter-personal dialogue**.

Intercommunity dialogue (Fernando, 1988:116) or **inter-community dialogue** (Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, 1992:19) refers to dialogue at the community level. One such movement is **Interfaith Search** which tries “to find ways of building bridges of respect and understanding between people of different religious traditions for the sake of the wider community” (Ahern, 1998:3). **Intra-western conversation** (Rousseau, 1982:i) describes dialogue within the Western world. **East-West cultural dialogue** (Sharpe, 1986:279) describes dialogue between Eastern and Western worldviews. **Interreligious and intercultural dialogue** (O’Neill, 1990:x) is cognisant of religious and cultural differences as a set, while **Hebrew-Greek dialogue** (Taylor, 1984:185) refers to intercultural dialogue between Jewish and Gentile worldviews. Stephen Dudek (2000:42) referred to **intercultural dialogue**. Its goal “in the building and planning process is not to create an ethno-relative or ethno-neutral environment, but rather to create an environment where ethnocentricity yields and dialogue is encouraged with new and equally valid cultural perspectives.”

Some churches refer to the **dialogue of love** (Neuner, 1991:287) and the **dialogue of truth** (Neuner, 1991:287), while others make a distinction between “dialogue of love and dialogue in truth. Both are important, they cannot be separated; both belong together. For we must do the truth in love and love can be authentic only when it is an expression of truth” (Kasper, 2000:297). **Habitual dialogue** (Murphy, 1978:151) describes the relationship between Christians and Communists where each side respects each other through joint mundane experiences firmly rooted in the life and activity of the workers in a labour movement. **Confessional dialogue** (Hick, 1980:80) occurs when one dialoguer witnesses to his own faith, convinced that it has the absolute truth, whilst his partner has only relative truth. This is opposed to **truth-seeking dialogue** (Hick, 1980:81) where the partners are conscious that the Transcendent Being is infinitely greater than their own limited vision of it. So, they share their visions in the hope of coming to a fuller awareness of the Divine Reality which confronts them both.

A dialogue which tries to avoid potentially divisive issues can degenerate into a **dialogue of the devout** (Cox, 1989:119) which is “so rarefied it doesn’t ruffle anyone. It could melt away into yet another version of that endless “spiritual quest” that lures so many seekers so far into the elysium they forget the nettlesome issues people of faith have to wrestle with on *terra firma*” (Cox, 1989:119). When dialogue takes place between peoples of other religions which Christians cannot worship or pray with, then only **sociological dialogue** (Samartha, 1981:58), not theological dialogue, can take place. If informal dialogues occur over lunch then it is referred to as a **luncheon dialogue** (Cox, 1989:67). More formalised dialogues have delegates positioned around the “**dialogue**” table (Cox, 1989:60) within a **dialogical community** (Siejk, 1995:230), with a predetermined **interfaith boundary** (Boys, Lee and Bass, 1995:268), and engage in active questioning to create a **dialogical context** (Siejk, 1995:236).

If not, then it can create “a **non-dialogical ghetto-like existence**” (Fitzgerald, 1994:69) which can lead to “a **compromised dialogue** [which] is better than no dialogue at all” (Ariarajah, 1999:67). It can also possibly disintegrate into “a **failed**” dialogue, where a people end up in deep disagreement and at times break up with no acceptable positions to report on” (Ariarajah, 1999:21). When dialogue partners decide to get back together again, it can be called **restored Christian-Jewish dialogue** (Trepp, 1982:159), **the new dialogue** (Trepp, 1982:161), sometimes with an evaluative label attached, such as **meaningful Christian-Jewish dialogue** (Trepp, 1982:161). Prof. Michael Pye (2001:5) suggested bipolar labels, namely, “**hard**” dialogue [which] would be self-presentational, uncompromising and in the end unproductive...[while] “**soft**” dialogue might be understood to be gentle, patient, imaginative and creative, leaving many questions open for future consideration.”

Having a dialogue (Kramer, 1993:209) refers to two or more people who are speaking *at* each other, as opposed to **being a dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:209) where two or more people speak *with* each other. When one religious tradition activates a dormant element within another, it is called **dialogical accentuation** (Sharma, 1989:495); and when talking about the interface between dialogue and religion, such an exchange has been called **dialogic theology** (Rajashekar, 1987:15). Then there is the **ecumenical deal**. Namely: “the discussion of the Jewish-Christian establishment on how to keep intact its own self-definition and institutional arrangement against the onslaught of history and critical thought coming from dissenters both outside and within the empire” (Ellis, 1994:88).

Some Evaluative Dialogue Labels: Judgement as Naming

There is a bewildering array of labels and descriptors referring to the various dialogue sources, natures and descriptions, in addition to the authors’ hopes, desires, and intentions about them. For example: **authentic dialogue** (Ariarajah, 1999:69), **authentic interreligious dialogue** (Shapiro, 1989:34), **authentic religious dialogue** (Panikkar, 1989:486), **authentic theological dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:159), **authentic interreligious, interideological dialogue**

(Swidler, 1990:42), **bidirectional dialogue** (Teipen, 1994:356), the **Budapest dialogue** (Pereira, 1987:264), **cautious dialogue** (Cox, 1989:57), **Christian dialogue** (Cox, 1989:5), **constructive dialogue** (Crow Jr., 2000:96), **continual dialogue** (Mojzes, 1978:11), **creative dialogue** (Siejk, 1995:234), **curious dialogue** (Cox, 1989:71), **deep dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:119), **deeper dialogue** (Ariarajah, 1999:90), **direct dialogue** (Hotchkin and Borelli, 1990:54), **effective dialogue** (Sonn, 1989:463), **engaged dialogue** (Abugan, 1992:19), **formal dialogue** (Hughes, 1994:34), **fraternal dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:151), **fruitful dialogue** (Raguin, 1977:76), **fruitful inter-religious dialogue** (Sharpe, 1974:87), **genuine dialogue** (Peters, 1986:885), **genuine interreligious dialogue** (Cox, 1989:12), **genuine and sustained inter-religious dialogue** (Rajashekar, 1987:15), **genuine Hindu-Christian dialogue** (Cox, 1989:71), or **genuine Jewish-Christian dialogue** (Cox, 1989:119), **healthy dialogue** (Younan, 1995:17), **honest dialogue** (Cox, 1989:7), **honest and open dialogue** (Jackson, 1985:47).

There is also: **important dialogue** (Cox, 1989:124), **intensive dialogue** (Sharpe, 1974:90), **international dialogue** (Younan, 1995:18), **interpersonal dialogue** (The Secretariat for Non-Christians, 1990:60), **interreligious communication** (Valkenberg, 2000:109), **interreligious communication and dialogue** (Smith, 1973:57), **Islamic dialogue** (Sonn, 1989:451), **living dialogue** (Pratt, 1994:12), **living and appreciative dialogue** (Brown, 1984:112), **meaningful dialogue** (Williams, 1993:70), **meaningful and sensitive dialogue** (Sigal, 1993:110), **national dialogue** (Sandidge, 1992:243), **new dialogue** (Bermbach, 1978:98), **official dialogue** (Black, 1991:7), **official and formal dialogue** (Samartha, 1981:9), **one-way dialogue** (Swidler, 1983:3), **ongoing dialogue** (Klostermaier, 1984:758) or **on-going dialogue** (King, 1990:122), **open dialogue** (Thangaraj, 1991:167), **patient dialogue** (Mitri, 1995:26), **patiently pursued dialogue** (Swidler, 1982:12).

Furthermore, there is: **Pentecostal dialogue** (Sandidge, 1992:243), **present-day dialogue** (Zago, 2000:8), **'proper' religious dialogue** (Sharpe, 1974:89), **proto-dialogue** (Hughes, 1994:33), **pseudo-dialogue** (Friedman, 1987:104), **purposeless dialogue** (Mojzes, 1989:202), **real dialogue** (Peters, 1986:885), **real ecumenism** (Cabezon, 1999:121), **real interreligious dialogue** (Siejk, 1995:234), **real theological dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:159), **realistic inter-religious dialogue** (Anastasios (Yannoulatos), 2000:353), **respectful dialogue** (Mollenkott, 1987:66), **responsible inter-religious dialogue** (Anastasios (Yannoulatos), 2000:351), **serious dialogue** (Constantelos, 1989:398), **serious and constructive dialogue** (Thangaraj, 1991:163), **serious religious dialogue** (Sundararajan, 1986:245), **serious and authentic theological dialogue** (Sherwin, 1999:159), **sincere religious dialogue** (Anastasios (Yannoulatos), 2000:351), **theological inter-religious dialogue** (Fernandes, 1995:91), **true dialogue** (Newbigin, 1982:29), **true interfaith dialogue** (Marriage, 1996:1), **true inter-religious dialogue** (Anastasios (Yannoulatos), 2000:352), **truly open dialogue** (Kramer, 1993:210), **true interreligious or interideological dialogue** (Swidler, 1990:42), **trusting dialogue** (Cunningham, 1987:11), **truthful, humble and frank**

dialogue (Paul II, 1999:40), **unrestricted dialogue** (Ogden, 1994:7), **urgent dialogue** (Mitri, 1995:26), and **useful dialogue** (Dumoulin, 1974:37). No doubt, many more terms could be applied to the field if one had the time, will, and a good dictionary.

Conclusion

“What’s in a name?” Plenty! And will it smell just as sweet? That depends. As can now be appreciated, there are a bewildering variety of dialogue descriptors that will continue growing with increased religious deregulation and ecumenical fervour. So, it was not too surprising to find Eric Sharpe (1974:91) claiming:

Clearly the mere act of adopting a popular word [dialogue] does not ensure agreement as to its precise meaning. One is sometimes almost forced to reflect that the cause of sympathetic inter-religious dialogue might be better served if the word were to be laid aside for a time.

Although one can certainly sympathise with this suggestion, the cause of scientific dialoguing will not be advanced by doing so. Using these terms more carefully and more accurately rather than abandoning them is preferable. The above nomenclature variations will also hopefully help alleviate Pim Valkenberg’s (2000:109) suspicion of the whole enterprise. Namely, that dialogue is “used so often in certain circles that it seems to be a magic word: every right-minded person must agree with it, because it seems to imply a certain basic kind of liberal politeness that is almost equivalent to being human.”

In conclusion, academic precision requires a more thoughtful consideration of what one actually means by “dialogue.” The following pragmatic recommendations are a useful first step. When talking about organised, formal, academic, intentional, dialogue-of-specialists style of event, it is best referred to as **interreligious, intrareligious and interideological dialogue** because of its taxonomic inclusiveness. This term is more accurate than David Krieger’s (1993:340) formulation of: (a) **intercultural**, (b) **interreligious**, (c) **interconfessional**, and (d) **interideological dialogue**. Why? Because items “(b),” “(c)” and “(d)” match the previous nomenclature system in a more scientific way, item “(a)” is either redundant or subsumed under the other three categories, and the recommended term is less cumbersome to utilise.

For the sake of brevity, the terms **religious dialogue** (Lee, 1991:186; Panikkar, 1975:408; Sherwin, 1999:159; Spiegler, 1989:432; Sundararajan, 1986:245), or the (less satisfying) term **dialogue** (Ariarajah, 1977:57) can be used to indicate the three main dialogue taxonomies in a now restricted meaning of this old umbrella concept. As a universal term to account for *all* types of dialogic participants, then the phrase, **dialogue of the other** (King, 1998:51) is recommended.

Further research into the exact nature of dialogue, and how its terminology fits within the various theories of dialogue, and accompanying theoretical contexts and/or foundations, are worthy areas of future explications.

Endnotes

1. Logically speaking, an **interideological dialogue** refers to an encounter between two different ideologies (e.g., Feminists and Marxists (Barrett, 1988)), even if they discuss religious topics. However, within the dialogue literature, "interideological dialogue" has come to refer to an encounter between a religion (theistic) and a secular (non-theistic) ideology (e.g., Christianity and Marxism), and so it will be used herein.
2. A **tetralogue** can also be used to describe a four-way dialogue between different religions, as well as a mixture of religious and non-religious participants.

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