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THE ROLE OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION CURRICULA IN INTRA-INTER CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE

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Abstract

Comparative Religion is seen as an important curricula because it could serve as a mechanism for enhancing cross-cultural religious communication. The authors seek to examine the role of Comparative Religion as an important science for enhancing dialogue skills. Such a communication skill, however, must be developed from both intra- and inter-civilizational levels. The authors have employed an historical and textual analysis to re-examine Comparative Religion and its methodology. The authors proposed new curricula in Comparative Religion studies including criticism of the methodologies used in Comparative Religion. This includes a new methodology that considers the existing multicultural religious phenomenon as well as post-September 11, 2001 developments and the plans for departmentalization of Comparative Religion. For further benefit toward peace, harmony, and accepting co-existence, this study also highlights suggestions for developing the undergraduate and postgraduate programs at the higher education level.

On the basis of the premise no nation, religion, or culture has a monopoly on civilization, the world's today needs an urgent dialogue. In pursuing dialogues of civilization that are meaningful and effective, of which inter-faith dialogue is the core element, Bakar (2008) argues that the world today is confronted with a host of challenges