

Submission No. 45
Australian Parliament
Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Dealing with Diversity
conference

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6th April 2011

To Maria Vamvakinou MP,
chair of the Federal Parliament's **Migration Committee** (Joint Committee of both Houses) inquiry into **multiculturalism in Australia**.

As the Heads of Churches in Australia we represent many cultures and are very happy with the desire of the Australian government to enable people from other countries to come and live in Australia and make this their home.

We approve the desire of the Government to have a programme for social inclusion and to encourage new citizens to pursue their own language and religious orientation. However we have experienced problems and make the following requests:

- (1) Social inclusion should not be about accommodating the political ideology of migrants but should be about requiring migrants to assimilate into our existing Australian 'culture'.
- (2) 'Multiculturalism' means that we accept people from other countries because they want to come here and 'be Australian'. It does not mean that we are to change our legal system, our banking/financial structures or our marriage laws to be the same as the country from which the migrants have come.
- (3) We invite people to share the good parts of their particular ethnic culture with us so that we can enrich the Australian culture, but that does not mean we are regulated from commenting on these other values, philosophies or religious ideas. We have and must preserve our freedom to critique all worldviews.
- (4) Our Australian culture is not the same as the cultures of other countries which ultimately means we do not want to lose our Australian 'identity'. Our identity is underpinned by our history, our democratic political ideology, our legal inheritance and by our Christian heritage¹. It is an inclusive identity. This means we welcome everyone, regardless of race so long as each one is willing to assimilate into a nation by sharing the values, the fate and the future of the Australian people. Our Australian identity ties the individual to an inheritance, a tradition, a loyalty and a culture. This means that leaders within the migrant community need to promote assimilation whilst indicating that the private religious stance and the use of another language in the home are not destroyed.²

¹ This means that Christian practices such as Nativity Scenes in shopping malls, Bibles in hospitals, and ecumenical services in State schools should not be abolished so as to please those of other religious persuasions.

² Sheik al-Hilali recently described Christians and Jews (people of the book) as 'the worst in God's creation'. He has described well over 70% of Australian as 'the worst in God's creation'. <http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt>.

- (5) It is right that we enable various organizations to teach English to migrants since citizenship should require some proficiency in our national language.
- (6) We should be honest and admit that cultures do not mix, they clash. If multiculturalism purposes to keep other cultures distinct it will ferment inter-communal disharmony (as we have witnessed in Cronulla).³ We want to maintain our Australian culture and not develop a collection of distinct ethnic cultures nor do we want to become a multi tribal nation.
- (7) We should realize that multi-culturalism is not currently defined in a rational way and thus it becomes a political exercise based on political correctness and any discussion of it raises emotional responses about being racists. We need the freedom to discuss the usefulness of other cultural concepts being brought into Australia and be free in the political domain to determine that some cultural practices such as FGM, polygamy or Fascist ideology are unacceptable.
- (8) Multiculturalism should be characterised by the absence of discrimination and the presence of individual freedom. In such a society there is cultural freedom and the freedom of conscience. Individuals are free to engage in cultural activity by themselves or in association with others. Those who wish to live in isolation may do so, but all are free to intermingle and interact. Culture belongs to the people and its destiny must remain in their hands. Numerous immigrants have come to Australia not because of a state-guaranteed cultural environment, but because of the expectation that Australia affords the freedom and opportunity for individual advancement. Far from discouraging migration, the Anglomorph culture of Australia, with its liberal political traditions, has served as a major attraction to immigrants.
- (9) Will Durant, the famous 20th century American historian, wrote that “A great civilization cannot be destroyed from outside if it has not already destroyed itself from within.”⁴ This is exactly what happened in Rome, 16 centuries ago. In the 5th century, the Roman Empire fell to the Germanic Barbarians. There is no doubt that the Roman civilization was far superior to that of the Barbarians; yet, Rome fell! Rome fell because it had suffered a loss of belief in its own civilization. It had lost the will to stand up and fight for survival. Rome did not fall overnight. Rome fell gradually. We need to teach our people about our history, our inherited values, our legal system and our political commitment to democracy. The government has promoted commitment to language and the rule of law, yet it is allowing variations, such Sharia finance and unofficial polygamy. There is a lack of effort in teaching our laws and the Australian way of life (values), whilst there is effort by the Multicultural unit of the Federal Dept of Immigration and Citizenship to be discriminatory and promote one particular migrant religion.⁵
- (10) It is interesting that the USA does not practice multiculturalism, yet is the biggest and most successful immigrant society in history - more than 310 million people live there from every corner of the globe. It has a black President, Asian state governors (including two Punjabis) and a vastly more ethnically diverse cabinet and corporate leadership than Australia.⁶
- (11) We realize that ‘Multiculturalism’ in Australia officially promotes an overriding loyalty to Australia, respect for other people's rights and Australian law, recognition of people's cultural origins, respect for diversity, the need to make maximum economic use of the skills people bring to Australia and equity

³ See also article in *The Australian* Jan 20 & 21, 2011, against democracy (“Sharia4Australia”).

⁴ “*Caesar and Christ*” (1944).

⁵ For instance “Muslims in Australia – a Snap shot”, put out in 2009 and no equivalent about e.g. Buddhism (the fastest growing religion in Australia). Or “Learning from One another – Bringing Muslim perspective into Australian Schools”, Feb 2011. Again a discriminatory product !!

⁶ Greg Sheridan [The Australian](#) April 02, 2011.

in access to government services. However, it is the lack of teaching of these values to migrants before they become citizens and the lack of teaching all these aspects in our schools which needs greater effort.

- (12) As part of the social inclusion programme we would like to see an end to the current tribalism with people of the same culture living in the same suburbs. The government needs to devise a way of spreading migrant communities around the country so that our new citizens live among our current citizens.
- (13) Finally, let us define 'multiculturalism' as a welcome to those who want to be part of our Australian society and who will adapt to our heritage.

This is signed by David Claydon **ex Palestine**, and John Nammour **ex Lebanon** on behalf of [Dealing with Diversity](#):

Yours faithfully

Canon Dr David Claydon dandrclaydon2@bigpond.com
Chair

Approved also by

Rev John Nammour
Conference Secretary