



The **Religious Studies Programme**, in association with the **UNESCO Chair in Interreligious Understanding and Relations** and the **2015 Parliament of the World's Religions**, invite you to a timely seminar.

Should there be religious limits to absolute media freedom of expression?

Following the Charlie Hebdo tragedy in Paris there have been calls for renewed consideration of the nature of media freedom and freedom of expression. Should there be unlimited press freedom? Should media be allowed to deliberately offend minority communities? Should they be permitted to do this repeatedly? Do our democratic freedoms rely on freedom of expression and a “free press”? Can we have a media that is well informed, free and responsible?

We have tended to debate this issue in terms of a clash of competing human rights and have historically privileged the right of media freedom over minority religious rights. We already have restrictions on unbridled media freedom in relation to decency, privacy and facticity. Should we have religious restrictions too? We also have protections in terms of the new Harmful Digital Communications Bill, the Press Council, the Broadcasting Standards Act and union and media outlets’ codes of practice. Do these work? Do they protect vulnerable religious minorities in New Zealand? Do we need further debate on these issues?

The aim of this discussion is to focus on the New Zealand context and creatively debate and discuss the issues, led by our panel who will address such questions as: Are religious communities sufficiently protected in NZ from offence and discrimination in the media? Do the NZ press do a good job reporting religion, accurately, fairly and in an informed fashion? Would guidelines on not causing religious offence overly restrict press freedom in NZ? Does NZ have a free press?

**Monday 10 August, Council Chambers,
Victoria University, 6.15-8.30pm**

Moderator: Ced Simpson

Plenary speaker: Paul Morris

Panellists: Dave Moskovitz, Tayyaba Khan, Jenny Chalmers,
Joris de Bres, Tom Scott, Selva Ramasami, John Shaver

Rapporteur: David Zwartz

Robert Mackay: 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions Snippet