Lunchtime Seminar Mohandas Gandhi and John Hick on Religious Pluralism

WHEN:  August 20, 2014 @ 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
WHERE:  Centre for Theology & Ministry  
         29 College Crescent  
         University of Melbourne, Parkville VIC 3052  
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In the present-day multicultural context, religious pluralism continues to be a contentious issue. This paper focuses on two eminent thinkers whose perspectives on religious pluralism have attracted much attention: Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948), known to the world for his nonviolent campaign against British rule, and John Hick (1922–2012), a renowned British philosopher of religion and theologian. My primary aim is to identify and explore significant correspondences in their thinking on religious pluralism, rather than engaging with the contentious debate their positions on religious pluralism have ignited in Western Christian theological discourse. Situating them in their respective contexts, this paper attempts to draw attention to concurrences in their notion of religion, concept of Truth/Real, and approach to conflicting truth-claims.

Dr Sharada Sugirtharajah, Senior Lecturer in Hindu Studies at the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham. She taught in India before embarking on her academic career at the University of Birmingham in the mid-1990s. She is an Associate Fellow of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Her research focuses particularly on the issue of representation of Hinduism in orientalist, missionary, colonial and postcolonial discourses. Her research interests also cover women issues, interreligious relations, and diasporic Hinduism. She is the author of Imagining of Hinduism: A Postcolonial Perspective (Routledge, 2003), and is currently working on Orientalist and nationalist constructions of Hinduism.